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ABSTRACT

The education/employment situation of young people in Japan is examined as part of a project to broaden perspectives on social, educational, and employment issues in contemporary societies. Youth problems in Japan stem from the incredibly rapid industrialization and social change that have taken place in Japan since World War II. In spite of this social change, however, consistant emphasis has been given to education by successive governments. Major targets of educational policy have been to make primary schooling widely available and to use higher education as a means of developing the talents of a small number of highly competent people. This diffusion of basic and higher education has had tremendous impact upon employment in recent years. For example, most youth tend to start working upon completion of senior high school or university education. The almost negligible number of youths seeking jobs immediately upon completion of the nine years of compulsory schooling is too small to cause the glut of job seekers which affects many other industrialized nations. Like other industrial countries, Japan faced an economic crisis in the early 1970s. However, in comparison with most other industrial countries, the degree of unemployment has been less serious. Japanese youth, consequently, are less likely to encounter problems related to the inability to find work than to feel alienated from a society based on traditions they do not share. (DB)

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EDUCATION AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN JAPAN

Hidetoshi Kato

A STUDY PREPARED FOR THE CARNEGIE COUNCIL ON POLICY STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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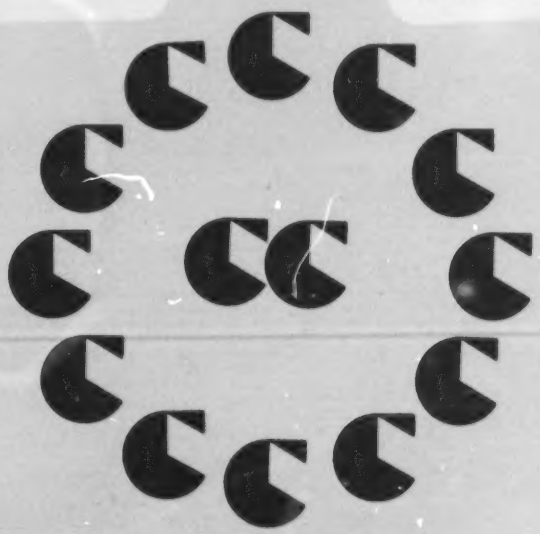

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by Hidetoshi Kato

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Education and Youth Employment in Contemporary Societies

A Series of Special Studies

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Contents

Foreword	vii
1. The Role of Education in Modern Japan	1
2. Contemporary Yout', Problems	7
3. Youth and Unemployment	16
4. Employment Policies and Practices	27
5. Impact of Changes in Education	35
6. Access and Equality of Education	44
7. Values and Deviants	52
8. The Future	62
Problems of transition • Dilemmas in education • Attitudes toward work	
References	71

Foreword

This is one of seven publications presenting studies commissioned by the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education as a means of providing a global perspective for education and youth employment in contemporary societies. The remaining publications will be concerned with education and youth employment in Belgium, by Henry Janne; Mexico and South Asia, by Alberto Hernández Medina and Carlos Muñoz Izquierdo and Manzoor Ahmed, respectively; Poland, by Barbara Liberska; Great Britain, by Stuart Maclure; Sweden and Denmark, by Gösta Rehn and K. Helveg Petersen, respectively; and the Federal Republic of Germany, by Klaus von Dohnanyi. Margaret M. Gordon, associate director of the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, is the general editor of the series. To the authors of these studies, and to Hidetoshi Kato, whose work appears in this volume, we express our deep appreciation.

The German Marshall Fund generously provided support for two international conferences on education and youth employment which were attended by several of the authors of studies for this series and which have contributed significantly to the Council's deliberations on this subject. The International Council for Educational Development, under the direction of James A. Perkins, coordinated the conferences and arranged for the participation of the essayists in this project. We acknowledge this contribution with profound thanks.

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CLARK KERR
Chairman
Carnegie Council on Policy Studies
in Higher Education

1

The Role of Education in Modern Japan

One decisive factor in the incredibly rapid industrialization of Japan over the past 100 years has been the consistent emphasis on and efforts given to education by successive governments. Even though the contemporary term "manpower" was unknown until recently; what the policy makers of this country successfully implemented during the past century was in actuality a carefully designed "manpower strategy."

The leaders of modern Japan who emerged after the Meiji Restoration of 1868 recognized the importance of education in building a new nation and took strong initiatives in instituting a nationwide school system. As early as 1868 the first primary school was inaugurated, and in 1871 primary-school education became compulsory throughout the country. Institutions of higher education were also encouraged by the government. A medical school and a foreign-language school, which had continued from the pre-Restoration period, were integrated and transformed into a new university system in 1868. The university was totally financed by the government and in 1877 was reorganized as Tokyo University.

There seemed to be two major targets in the education policy of the Meiji government. The first was to make primary schooling widely available so that everyone could become literate. The second was to use higher education as a means of

developing the talents of a small number of highly competent people. In a word, the government believed that both a literate public and an intellectual elite were essential to the development of the nation, which was far behind the West.

The government did not hesitate to invest a considerable amount of money in education, especially higher education. To speed up society's adoption of advanced science and technology as well as the sociopolitical institutions of the West, the government invited to Japan hundreds of scholars, doctors, and engineers from Europe and the United States, paying them salaries much higher than those of Japanese ministers, including the prime minister. At the same time, after careful examination and screening, the government sent some 400 bright young people abroad to study every year. As a result of such extraordinary investments, Japan was able to become self-sufficient in human resources in the 1890s. It is no exaggeration to say that the education policy of Japan in the middle nineteenth century produced one of the most radical and dramatic experiments in the history of education.

The most important aspect of this promotion of higher learning was the underlying philosophy that evaluation and recruitment of youth was based strictly on achievement rather than on social status. A young man, regardless of his family background and social status, could be selected as a prospective member of the country's elite if he demonstrated intellectual excellence. The youths selected were given full support for their academic pursuits, often including the opportunity to study abroad. Upon graduation from the university or their return from abroad, the government, as well as the business community, usually provided these young people with responsible positions. Their status, of course, was accompanied by good economic compensation and social respect. It is not surprising, therefore, that many ambitious young people took the official examination to enter universities, especially the prestigious Tokyo Imperial University.

Indeed, it was in this context that Yukichi Fukuzawa, an eminent thinker and educator of the nineteenth century, wrote

his famous book *An Encouragement of Learning* (1872). The book began with a clear and crisp paragraph:

> It is said that heaven does not create one man above or below another man. This means that when men are born from heaven they are all equal. . . . Nevertheless, as we broadly survey the human scene, there are the wise and the stupid, the rich and the poor, the noble and the lowly, whose conditions seem to differ as greatly as clouds and mud. The reason for this is clear. In the *Jitsugokyo* we read that if a man does not learn he will be ignorant, and that a man who is ignorant is stupid. Therefore, the distinction between wise and stupid comes down to a matter of education.

This book had an incredible circulation (3.4 million copies) and a wide reputation in the latter half of the nineteenth centrury. It strongly encouraged upward intellectual and social mobility. It is hard to find a level of "achievement motivation" as high as that of Japanese youths of the nineteenth century.

The policy of evaluating and recruiting youths by their achievement was, though it may sound strange, inherited from the Chinese system. Since the sixth century, government officials in China had been recruited by examination, and the only criterion was achievement, regardless of the candidate's birth, locale, and social class. Opportunities were provided on a literally egalitarian basis. Great respect for intellectual achievement and intellectualism was built into Chinese society. Both Japan and Korea adopted this philosophy, and quite contrary to the popular assumption that Japan was traditionally a rigidly structured society, in reality social mobility was extremely high in the academic and intellectual areas even during the feudal period. The new Meiji government wisely reactivated the system and combined it with the modern egalitarian philosophy of the West.

Aspiration toward intellectual achievement was thus

mobilized, and ambitious Japanese youths with a variety of social backgrounds came to the academic and intellectual centers of the country, especially Tokyo, to take the entrance examination for prestigious institutions. Hundreds of thousands of young people traveled to Tokyo from every corner of the country, many on foot—sometimes with bare feet. Metaphorically speaking, what happened in Tokyo in the late nineteenth century was comparable to the "gold rush" in the United States. The difference between the American "gold rush" and the Japanese "university rush" was that in the former people looked for tangible objects by chance, while in the latter they sought intangible achievement by skill.

The competition to enter Tokyo Imperial University was very severe. It was not unusual that only one out of thirty applicants would be finally taken after the three-day examination. Those who were accepted were given full governmental support, encouragement, and above all, a bright future. Many who failed still looked for a second chance; they stayed in town, working during the daytime and attending preparatory school in the evening. The Japanese youth of that period might be seen as exemplifying McLelland's "achievement motivation" theory (1961).

The tradition of intellectualism and an egalitarian examination system have been preserved—or at least have survived—throughout the modern history of Japan. It is still the firm belief of the majority of the Japanese people that higher education is the only means through which one can get a good job, a stable income, and reputable social status. Parents who missed educational opportunity often stress to their children the need to be equipped with higher education. Recently, a cartoon depicted an "education-oriented" mother telling her unwilling son: "Don't be like your father. He is a loser who could not enter Tokyo University."

In reality, of course, it is a modern myth that a college diploma is an assurance of success. In 1976, almost 100 percent of middle-school graduates in Japan entered high school, and approximately 38 percent of the high school graduates were accepted by colleges and universities. As will be discussed in

detail in the following chapters, society can no longer guarantee "success" for the half-million youths who graduate from universities annually. But belief seems to be much stronger than objective facts, and more and more young people are competing for the better universities. Educators forecast that more than 50 percent of any given age group will go on to the universities before 1990.

The zeal, or craze, for higher education in Japan is somewhat hard to believe for outsiders, but for many Japanese youths, the entrance examination to universities is a matter of life and death, at least socially. During the period of the entrance examination (February–March), the mass media calculate the "competition ratio" of each university, and weekly magazines publish special issues devoted to the entrance examination, with information on average scores, trends of tests, and so forth. Major hotels near the big academic centers, such as Tokyo and Kyoto, are fully booked by the applicants during the season. Also, it is not unusual for high school graduates who failed the examination to wait another year or two in order to challenge the intended university again. To accommodate those who failed, hundreds of "preparatory schools" are in business, and the more eminent ones are commercially very successful. They even give their own entrance examination, and Japanese high school graduates must withstand severe competition to be accepted by preparatory schools as well.

In reviewing the pattern of development of higher education in Japan over the past two decades, however, one very important feature emerges in comparison with similar development in the United States. According to government statistics, the percentage of university graduates in Japan in the over-65 age group is 3.9 percent, while in the United States it is 10.1 percent. For the 25 to 29 age group, the percentage of university graduates is 16.9 percent in Japan and 25.6 percent in the United States. The implication is that the gap between older and younger age groups is more drastic in Japan than in the United States. Also, it should be noted that in the United States, it took some 20 years (1940–1960) for the rate for the over-25 population to grow from 5.4 percent to 9.7 percent,

while in Japan a similar growth from 4.5 percent to 10.1 percent was achieved in only ten years (1960–1970). In a word, the rate of higher education's growth in Japan has been twice as fast as that of the United States. This rapid growth, as will be discussed later, had a sudden impact upon many areas of society, including the labor market and employment structure.

The belief in higher education is extremely wide and deep in Japan today, and youth as well as their parents still anticipate very good occupations upon graduation—in spite of the fact that opportunities have almost reached the saturation point for university graduates. Higher education in Japan is still expanding, while opportunities for university graduates are declining. It is true that university graduates, until several decades ago, were almost unconditionally guaranteed full employment in the managerial sector of the society, but it is doubtful that even 10 percent of today's graduates will finally attain managerial positions in either public or private organizations. It is against this historical and social background that the relationship between education and employment must be reexamined and that realistic educational planning must be developed. The following sections will introduce some of the facts and problems in this area, with special emphasis on the alternatives of education and employment for contemporary Japanese youth.

2

Contemporary Youth Problems

The diffusion of higher education has been one of the most remarkable characteristics of the contemporary youth culture in Japan. The change in the educational structure naturally has had a tremendous impact upon employment in recent years. Table 1 shows the drastic change in the composition of those entering the labor force in the past 15 years.

Table 1. Educational Background of Persons Entering the Labor Force

	Junior high	*Senior high*	*College/Univ.*
1965	44.5%	44.9%	10.6%
1970	21.7	58.3	20.0
1975	12.3	57.0	30.7
1980 (estimate)	8.3	53.2	38.3

SOURCE: Japan, Ministry of Education, 1976.

In 1965, college and university graduates formed only 10 percent of those entering the labor force; they were a minority. However, it is estimated that in 1980, only 8.3 percent of the new labor force will consist of those whose education stopped at the junior high level—they will be the new minority. In a word, the figures for junior high graduates and college graduates are almost reversed, while the proportion of senior high gradu-

ates remains relatively stable. Indeed, in 1975, the absolute number of junior high graduates who went straight into the labor market was only 100,000 throughout Japan. It is safe to say that those who take jobs upon graduation from the nine years of compulsory education, at the age of 15 or 16, are almost negligible in number. Most youths tend to start working after completing either senior high school or university education.

Like other industrial countries, Japan faced an economic crisis after 1973, and the employment situation also became difficult. However, in comparison with most of the countries in the West, the degree of unemployment has been less serious. According to the recent edition of the *White Paper on Labor*, the rate of unemployment in 1976 was 2.4 percent. The figure was much worse than the 1.1 percent in 1969, but much better than the unemployment rate in western Europe and the United States in the same year. The socioeconomic and politico-cultural background of this relatively low unemployment ratio is complex. The lifetime employment system of Japanese organizations, the financial adjustments and subsidies of the economy by the public sector, the profitable export market, and many other factors have helped keep employment stable. In any event, Japan has been successful in avoiding a serious unemployment problem.

As far as youth are concerned, employment opportunities are very promising, at least statistically. The ratio of demand to supply was 5.9 for junior high school graduates and 3.4 for senior high graduates in the labor market in 1975. In other words, the labor market is a seller's market for Japanese youth today. Though the ratio is more severe for university graduates, they are also free from the unemployment problem if they are willing to take any kind of job. It is safe to say that Japanese youth today enjoy full employment, though they may not be quite satisfied with the jobs they have.

There are some youthful minorities who are not given equal opportunities for employment. For instance, women are generally handicapped in finding jobs. Many firms recruit only men for managerial positions, and unemployment among

women college graduates is potentially serious. Though Japan does not have much of an ethnic problem, Korean and Chinese youths are not likely to be given equal opportunities. They are, in spite of their Japanese citizenship, more or less discriminated against by employers as well as by the general public.

An additional problem is that though employers are willing to hire the young, they are not necessarily pleased with their education. Employers are astonished by the fact that new graduates have not had enough professional training to meet the requirements of practical work; they also find young people immature. Therefore, it is a common practice for employers to provide special training programs for newly recruited young employees. In some cases, to substitute for apprenticeship systems and to satisfy the educational aspirations of junior high school graduates, employers have established their own senior high schools to give the necessary vocational and general education to future employees. These company-owned senior high schools, though few in number, are approved by local education commissions and authorized by the Ministry of Education, and their graduates receive a diploma equivalent to that of a regular high school.

The social change that has taken place in Japan in the past three decades is so revolutionary that there seem to be more discontinuities than continuities between traditional culture and youth culture today. For example, on the level of material culture, it is found that the younger generation prefers meat and "Westernized" foodstuffs, while the older generation is more fond of fish and other traditional foods. An opinion survey showed that youth today seek happiness and a leisure-oriented life-style for their future, while the youths of 30 years ago saw as their mission a contribution to the betterment of their nation. Though family ties in Japanese society are much stronger than in other industrial countries, the role of the family as a socializing agent has been replaced by other agents, especially mass media. Generally speaking, youth today look for a model in the mass media rather than in their parents. Furthermore, contemporary Japanese youths are often labeled "young aristocrats," meaning that they have the most flexible disposable in-

come in the society. They are the children of affluence, with few obligations, and they do not hesitate to spend their earnings for overseas travel and for expensive commodities and services which their parents in their 40s and 50 cannot afford. Marketing experts have been very successful in selling goods and services to this "youth market."

The mass media find in youth their largest audience, and it is no exaggeration to say that the primary target of radio broadcasting is young people. Moreover, thanks to freedom of speech, certain media have been trying to sell sex and violence, responding to the naive and curious minds of youth. Observers may be struck, for instance, by the poor quality and bad taste of comic magazines widely read among young people in Japan today.

Relative to the impact of mass media, it is important to note that juvenile delinquency has gradually become a social problem. In 1975, some 160,000 young people under 20 years of age were arrested for violations of the criminal code and another 210,000 for traffic violations. Juvenile crimes include violence, sexual crimes, prostitution, stealing, blackmailing, and so forth, and criminologists point out that youth today tend to commit more violent crimes than those of ten years ago. Some high school dropouts in urban areas have even belonged to underworld gangster organizations, and while the use of drugs is almost unknown among Japanese youth because of severe police control, among younger teens, paint-thinner "sniffing" is often found in urban centers.

As suggested earlier, the severe competition in schooling peculiar to Japan borders on the pathological. The entrance examinations to colleges and universities—even high schools—are extremely competitive, and the method of examination is generally rigid. An applicant, for instance, is expected to give the exact year when Buddhism was imported to Japan. The correct answer is 538, and such answers as "the 530s" or "the early sixth century" are rejected. Preparation for the entrance examinations thus requires a lot of memorization, often without much relevance. A young person who wants to be accepted by a college must memorize exact historical chronologies, names of

various places in the world, formulas in mathematics, physics, and chemistry, and so forth. A person is never tested for his or her creativity and imagination. The entrance examination, therefore, is an irritating and frustrating experience for all young men and women intending to enter colleges and universities.

Senior high schools function essentially as preparatory schools for the university entrance examination, so the high school curriculum is also affected by the methods and contents of the entrance examination. As many critics have pointed out, the high school in Japan today is a "cannery" where fragments of knowledge are canned and packed. High school, for many Japanese youths, is a gloomy place.

Problems with the education system do not stop here. Those fortunate students who are accepted by universities have another problem: When they were preparing for the entrance examination, they at least had a goal. But with that goal achieved, it is rather natural for a sensitive freshman to wonder why he or she came to a college or university. At the beginning of a new academic year in April, students are full of joy and excitement. But after several weeks, they find that university education is not what they had expected, and some of them become neurotic. What is known as "May syndrome" takes place.

For those who failed the entrance examination, there are several alternatives. Many ambitious young people enroll at once in another preparatory school, hoping for a second chance the next spring. Less ambitious people, or those who have a different philosophy, may decide to enter a professional or vocational school to become stenographers, television mechanics, cooks, and so forth. Another group of young people may decide to work. As mentioned before, there are huge demands for high school graduates in the labor market; it is not difficult for them to find jobs. But among those who failed the entrance examination, there remains a frustrated and desperate group of young people. Some of them commit suicide—though the number is declining in recent years. Others become "spontaneously unemployed," losing their ambition and aspiration for either

school or work. They spend meaningless hours at home or on the street, doing nothing. With the increasing affluence of the society, this group is becoming a new pathological problem.

Working conditions for youth are generally good in terms of both income and work load. But there is a gap between those who are working for big industries and those who have jobs in small-scale organizations. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, as far as income and working hours are concerned, the differences between the two groups are nominal; but the employees of big industries enjoy incomparably better fringe benefits than those in smaller firms. For instance, the former have access to a clean and inexpensive cafeteria, a good company hospital, and dormitories or vacation houses in the mountains and on the beach, while the latter have none of these. In Japan today, there is no class distinction in the traditional sense, but it is apparent that there is a distinction between big industries and minor firms in terms of fringe benefits; often the term "fringe" is an understatement.

A recent Japanese phenomenon related to working conditions is groups of "motorcycle crazies" who speed dangerously through the main streets of metropolitan areas. It has been found that they consist of high school dropouts and the employees of minor firms. Driving a motorcycle is a catharsis for young people who feel that they are "underdogs." Their frustration, even hostility, against those who have obtained a "ticket for success"—university students and employees in more prestigious organizations—lead them to show off with their shiny motorcycles and dangerous driving, even to the extent of racing police cars. They have very little feeling of loyalty to or solidarity with the organization they belong to, and this group is part of the "alienated youth" of contemporary Japan.

Neither university students nor high school students have much difficulty getting part-time jobs; for example, small retail shops, restaurants, and service stations are suffering from a labor shortage, but do not want permanent full-time employees because of the fluctuation in their business. Depending on the nature of the job, a student can earn the equivalent of $1.25 to $3.00 per hour. Another job possibility emerges from the en-

trance examination itself: many parents of high school students are more than willing to have private tutors at home. University students, including graduate students, if they are bright, will not find much difficulty getting jobs as private tutors for $5.00 an hour. According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education, some 80 percent of university students have taken part-time jobs to earn extra income, creating an area where very flexible and informal labor transactions take place. This part-time work, interestingly enough, is called "arbeit" (or *arubaito*) by students, because the students of three decades ago used this German term to show off their intellectual sophistication. In the early 1950s, university students were an elitist minority, and the general public were sympathetic to those young intellectuals engaged in "arbeit." The social context has changed, but the term itself survived, and of the millions of young "arbeiters" today, it is doubtful that 1 percent can speak German.

Unemployment social security is generous in Japan. Those who lose their jobs can receive approximately 60 percent of their previous income from the local Employment Security Office every month, and they also receive counseling when they come to the office to pick up their checks. Because of high demand, it is not difficult for young workers to find new jobs through the Employment Security Office. However, youths of today are very particular about the kinds of jobs they take. In 1975, some 250,000 employees under 20 years old left their job of their own volition. The major reason was either that the job "did not fit them" or that they did not like the "human relations" in the office or factory they had worked for. Surprisingly, very few people left their jobs because of "low income." In a word, youths today are more concerned with relationships in their work than with their incomes.

As is widely known, the Japanese salary system is characterized by a "bonus" paid to almost every employed person, including civil servants. The amount of the bonus varies, depending on the policy of each company and on the company's earnings in each year. If a company has made a huge profit, the management may decide to pay a bonus amounting to more

than 10 months' salary to every employee. The bonus is usually paid in June and December, and since the amount is so substantial, both white-collar and blue-collar workers can use the extra income for the purchase of durable goods, overseas travel, and other unusual expenditures. In the case of civil servants, it has become established practice for them to receive the equivalent of 2.25 months' salary in June and 2.75 in December. In other words, a worker is usually paid 17 months' salary annually. This institutionalized extra income makes the Japanese economy unique, and in the case of young people, the bonus comprises very flexible disposable income.

However, it may be misleading to assume that youth are uncritical spenders. It is true that the "youth market"—consisting of clothes, cosmetics, stereos and other durable goods, travel, and so forth—has been prosperous, but at the same time, youth are very savings oriented. A survey revealed that as of September 1975, 89.3 percent of youths had their own savings accounts, with average individual savings equivalent to $2,300. The major purpose of saving, according to the respondents, was "to prepare for marriage." On the average, they set their savings goal as $9,000, and this amount seems to be feasible, considering the extra income from bonuses. Furthermore, among urban middle-class youths it is a common practice for them to live with their parents until they get married and to save most of their own income. In some cases, they may contribute a nominal amount of money for the household, but parents tend to encourage their children to save their money in preparation for their future independence. Therefore, especially among young urban middle-class women who commute from their parents' home to their offices, it is not unusual to find savings amounting to more than $10,000.

Opinion surveys conducted by the prime minister's office show that the ideal of the majority of Japanese youth is a peaceful and cozy middle-class life-style, and that the political radicalism that prevailed in the late 1960s seems to have disappeared. Certain groups of political extremists who were active from 1968 to 1970 find themselves totally isolated in their early 30s today. They reached a "point of no return,"

however, and in desperation they still engage in occasional subversive activities. It is worthwhile to note that, without exception, the activists who engage in urban bombing, hijacking, and other political crimes are not youth any more—they are aged 32 to 35. However, it is also important to observe that whenever these "aging" radicals take the initiative—in demonstrations, for instance—they still can attract a considerable number of followers. The followers usually are temporary sympathizers, but depending on conditions and the historical context they may turn out to be new activists. Their potential cannot be underestimated, especially in view of the fact that, as discussed before, there are frustrated deviant youths who are handicapped either in education or in employment.

3

Youth and Unemployment

Unemployment among youth in Japan is not a serious social problem. According to the White Paper on Youth (Japan, Office of the Prime Minister, 1976), the absolute number of working youths in 1975 was 7.9 million, indicating that 96.9 percent of youths (except those in school) had jobs. Further, the apparent 3.1 percent unemployment rate is incorrect, because there were young people who did not want to be employed, including many young women who preferred to stay at home helping their mothers with housework.

Among those 7.9 million working youths, 1.6 million (20.4 percent) were in the 15 to 19 age group, and 6.3 million (79.6 percent) were 20 to 24 years old. Obviously, the majority of working youths were over 20, and the number as well as ratio of working young people under 20 has been declining as a result of the diffusion of higher education. Among the 7.9 million, 4.2 million (52.6 percent) were men, while 3.8 million (47.2 percent) were women. The young labor force accounted for 15.2 percent of the total working population in 1975, and there was a decline of 1.3 percent in comparison with 1974.

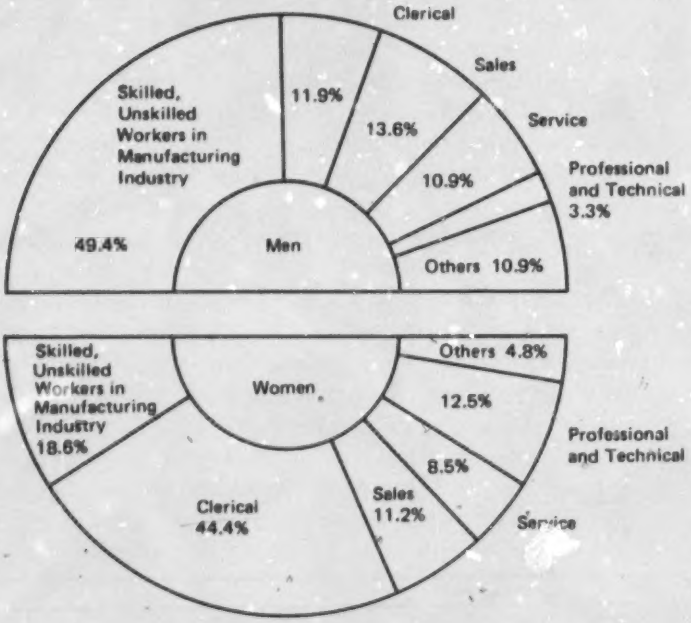
The majority of working youths (89.9 percent) are employed outside the family; 7.7 percent are household workers (for example, young men working on family farms); and 1.8 percent are self-employed. In terms of the sectors of the econ-

omy, the majority of youths are working in manufacturing, sales and distribution, and service industries. The number of youths in the primary sector of the economy (agriculture, fisheries, and so forth) is apparently becoming more and more negligible, especially among women. Figure 1 shows the occupational distribution of youths in 1975.

The recent economic recession, especially since 1973, has had a serious impact upon employment. In 1975, the number of unemployed reached almost one million, and the unemployment rate rose to 1.9 percent. In January–March of 1976, the unemployment rate temporarily went up to 2.4 percent. As Figure 2 shows, these figures were the worst in the past 10 years. Obviously, the postwar Japanese economy, which has enjoyed a high growth rate for two decades, is now coming to a turning point in terms of production, consumption, and employment.

Relatively speaking, however, younger people were less affected than others by the economic recession. As a matter of fact, demand exceeds supply in the youth labor market, and employers compete in the recruitment of promising young people, especially those in the 15 to 19 age group. It is almost impossible for many employers to find junior high school graduates who are willing to work rather than to go to senior high school. For example, in the Tokyo metropolitan area in the spring of 1977, some 260,000 young people graduated from junior high school, but only 2,500 of them—less than 1 percent—decided to take jobs upon graduation. The rest, the overwhelming majority, entered senior high school without paying much attention to the alternative of work. Indeed, since the middle 1960s, when more people started to go to senior high, employers began to refer to junior high graduate workers as "golden eggs," valuable yet difficult to obtain, and it is customary for employers to make "journeys in search of golden eggs." They visit small rural junior high schools where fewer graduates are heading for senior high, and try to persuade the young people to come to their offices and factories. Therefore, in the past 10 years, a consistent 30 percent or more of those taking jobs upon graduation from junior high school at the age of 15 migrated into the employment area, especially urban centers, from

Figure 1. Occupational distribution of young workers; ages 15 to 24, 1975



their home districts. As the following figures shows, the ratio of demand to supply in the employment market for 15-year-olds has been very high, even during the economic recession. In a word, the chances are only one out of five or six that employers can get a 15-year-old worker.

Job Opportunities for 15-year-olds
(Demand/Supply)

	Men	*Women*
1971	7.5	6.3
1972	5.9	5.2
1973	5.9	5.7
1974	6.9	6.5
1975	6.2	5.7

Figure 2. Unemployed rate and number of unemployed persons, 1965–1975

Furthermore, in 1975 33 percent of those who decided to work at the age of 15 also enrolled in senior high school, either in night classes or by correspondence. Thus, roughly one-third of junior high graduates working in offices and factories are working for senior high diplomas simultaneously. This number, according to estimates of various government agencies, is increasing rapidly; by 1980, it is expected that 50 percent of the workers aged 15 to 19 will be working senior high school students. As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6, with the inauguration of the Broadcasting University scheduled in 1978, working youths may have even more opportunities for higher education.

The majority of junior-high graduates work in the secondary sector of the economy, that is, in manufacturing industries as blue-collar workers: 71.8 percent of the men and 60.7 percent of the women who took jobs at the age of 15 in 1975 are in manufacturing industries, followed by service industries.

The shortage of labor among 18-year-olds (senior-high graduates) has also been severe. The ratio of demand to supply in the labor market for this group has been very high. Though the ratio is lower than that among 15-year-olds, demand significantly exceeds supply. The following figures show the labor-market trends for senior-high graduates, who might be referred to as "silver eggs."

Job Opportunities for 18-year-olds
(Demand/Supply)

	Men	*Women*
1971	5.3	2.9
1972	4.0	2.5
1973	3.9	2.6
1974	5.0	3.1
1975	4.3	2.7

However, the distribution of occupations is different in the case of senior-high graduates who get jobs at the age of 18 from that of junior-high graduates. In 1975, among some 600,000 senior-high graduates who found employment, men and women inclusive, those young people who were employed in manufacturing industries amounted to 31.3 percent, while 24.3 percent took jobs in wholesale/retail services, and 11.7 percent in banking, insurance, and real estate. Among men, 38.3 percent obtained jobs in the secondary sector (manufacturing), while 25.0 percent of the women worked in this sector—significantly lower figures than those for junior-high graduates. Among senior-high graduates who take jobs upon graduation, an almost equal number go to both the secondary and tertiary (trade and service) sectors of the economy.

In the 18-year-old group, too, the geographical balance between demand and supply is uneven. Such urban centers as Tokyo and Osaka have to recruit senior-high graduates from communities all over Japan, and approximately 30 percent of the workers in this group are migrants from rural districts to

more urban areas. Every spring, hundereds and thousands of young people, including junior-high graduates and senior-high graduates, are brought to industrial centers of the country, often by chartered trains.

Obviously, junior and senior high school graduates at ages 15 or 18 are quite secure as to job opportunities; ironically, it is among college and university graduates that there is insecurity about employment. In 1974, among 430,000 college and university graduates, 330,000 took jobs, 25,000 decided to enter graduate school, and 3,000 worked at hospitals as medical interns; but for the rest—more than 50,000 in number—what happened after graduation is unknown. Some of them went to vocational schools for further training; some may be working on their own; and some women may have become housewives. But it is not unlikely that a considerable number of university graduates are unemployed—most of them by choice. Many university professors in Japan today are familiar with graduates who do not take jobs simply because they feel that the opportunities offered to them are not appropriate to their diploma. For example, a graduate in economics may feel that the only position becoming to him is in the banking business. If he fails to get one and is offered a job as a salesperson in a department store instead, he may either take the job rather reluctantly or withdraw. Among this group of students in a changing society, there seem to be complicated sociophyschological conflicts of expectations.

In the past, when fewer than 10 percent of youths were in the prestigious situation of being admitted to universities, there was an implicit, and often explicit, promise that they would be given stable managerial jobs in either the public or private sector upon graduation. Therefore, a university diploma was regarded as a "ticket to success." Indeed, until two decades ago, even the student poorest in achivement did not have much difficulty in finding a promising position in a firm if he had a university diploma; employers as well as the society at large expected that any university graduate would be much more talented than "ordinary" young people of his age group, and that expectation was usually warranted. The two expectations—the expectation

of university students that they would be hired as junior executives and the employers' expectation that those who had university diplomas would be capable people—did not conflict with each other. Insofar as university graduates were a minority, they turned out to be an "automatic elite," and society confidently approved this automatic association between higher education and employment opportunities.

However, after the mid-1960s, when there was a population explosion of university graduates, a serious dissonance in these expectations began to take place. On the one hand, students still expected to fulfill their future dream of being government officials or business executives, although their specific expectations were more ambiguous than those of 20 years earlier; on the other hand, potential employers for these young people became aware of the fact that university graduates were not what they used to be. Employers today can no longer accommodate all new graduates with good positions, and at the same time they have learned from experience that the quality of university graduates is generally disappointing.

Actual unemployment among all youth aged 20 to 24 years old in Japan, however, does not appear to be a serious problem. In 1975, the unemployment rate for this age group was about 1.5 times the national rate—a considerably lower ratio than that prevailing in a number of other industrial countries. The ratio had risen somewhat in the late 1960s but after that remained relatively stable. Relative unemployment rates for youth 15 to 19 in Japan are also low by international standards and only slightly higher than for the 20 to 24 age group.

According to a survey conducted by the Japan Recruitment Center in late 1976, more than 80 percent of university students were still looking forward to obtaining positions in either government agencies or big business; but obviously, there were far fewer vacancies than students looking for them. Thus the conflict of expectations has become more and more serious; it seems that those most affected by recent economic changes are university graduates 22 to 24 years old.

There are, of course, those graduates who recognize the changes in the labor market and do not hesitate to take jobs

which a university graduate of 20 years ago would never have accepted. For instance, a recent survey revealed that 40 percent of the police force in the Tokyo metropolitan area were university graduates, and occasionally one finds a taxi driver or waiter with a B.A. degree. This new movement of university graduates into nonmanagerial areas may be regarded as a threat by the less educated, who previously monopolized these areas.

Indeed, a tragic irony is emerging in the relationship of job opportunities to education. A series of interviews with business executives conducted in the course of researching this study reveals that university diplomas are often barriers to employment. A top executive of a big trading company said that his company would not take any university graduates as secretaries. He stated: "I would rather have a junior college graduate who can type and file than a university graduate who majored in medieval history." In a word, the more education (especially nonpractical education) one attains, the narrower his or her job opportunities may be.

Moreover, business firms evaluate university graduates rather harshly. Among representative business executives in charge of personnel administration, 55.6 percent felt, according to a survey of 1975, that the caliber of university graduates had been declining considerably. In order to recruit the best young people, 34 percent of large firms (those with more than 5,000 employees) send out recruitment announcements to only a handful of prestigious universities. In other words, unless admitted to "name universities," students have no chance to take tests for and be interviewed by the big companies. This practice of the major firms accelerates the already high competition in entrance examinations for those "name universities," creating an additional disturbance in the Japanese education system.

Though the majority of Japanese youths feel that a university education is desirable for their career in terms of prestige, an objective observer recently calculated the gains and losses of higher education from monetary aspects and came to the conclusion that university education as an economic investment does not pay in the long run. The calculation was done by the editors of the Sunday *Mainichi*, a representative weekly

magazine. According to the magazine, the gap between the earnings of a university graduate and those of a senior high school graduate has narrowed over the past 10 years. In 1960, the average starting salary of a senior-high graduate was only 62.3 percent of that of a university graduate, but this figure rose to 71.4 percent in 1965, 75.9 percent in 1970, and 84.2 percent in 1975. Moreover, it was revealed that the lowest 10 percent of university graduates' starting salaries in 1976 were below those of the highest 10 percent of senior-high graduates. The difference in monetary earnings between university graduates and senior-high graduates is becoming more and more negligible.

There are, however, more opportunities for promotion for a university graduate, and in a lifetime, on the average, he or she will earn about $440,000, while the total earnings of a senior-high graduate will be around $330,000. But hypothetically, if a person invested the same amount of money as the cost of university education in a trust bond at the age of 18 and started working, then that person's total income (from earnings and interest) would be more than $550,000. In other words, the economic benefit of university education is not so great as people tend to imagine. Indeed, in several business firms, management has already adopted a salary scale without any distinction relative to employees' educational backgrounds. Statistics in the *White Paper on Labor* also indicate that the starting salary of high school graduates increased 21.9 percent over previous years in 1975, while the increase in the rate for university graduates was only 18.3 percent.

One of the problems of those young people who take jobs at the age of 15 or 18, however, is the high percentage of people who leave their jobs. During the calendar year of 1975, some 250,000 workers under 20 years of age (17.6 percent of the age group) were reported to have left their jobs. A more detailed study conducted by the Ministry of Labor showed that of those who obtained a job upon graduation from high school in 1970, some 20 percent quit the job within a year, 30 percent within three years, and another 20 percent within five years. In all, therefore, 70 percent of the new workers of 1970 were not on

the same job in 1975. These figures are striking. They include, of course, women who married and quit work, and an additional number of young people might have decided to go back to school. But the majority of the people quit because they felt more or less alienated. They thought that the jobs they took were not what they had expected, complained that their work was too dull or monotonous, or felt that the human relations aspects were too difficult to handle. Fortunately, because of the high demand for the young labor force, these young people who quit do not have much difficulty in finding another job; but it is likely that these young workers will discover other jobs also to be dissatisfying and disappointing.

Except for the ambitious and fortunate few who achieve upward mobility by changing jobs, many young people turn out to be "wandering workers" who hop from one job to another, dreaming of satisfying employment. The police and courts have discovered that significant numbers of juvenile delinquents happen to be "job hoppers." Therefore, it is too optimistic to conclude that full employment provides youth with a satisfactory sociopsychological environment. Quite the contrary, full employment has created hundreds of thousands of "straying sheep," who believe that there must be a better job than the one they have.

Another problem in the current youth labor market of Japan is the status of women. Except for very limited areas of employment, such as civil service (including teaching jobs in public schools), women are treated differently from men. For instance, the banking business will recruit hundreds of women who have graduated either from senior high school or junior college as tellers and secretaries; these positions are exclusively for women. But the university graduates recruited by the same bank are men who are hired exclusively as future executives, and it is quite improbable that a woman would be given such an opportunity. Generally speaking, it is safe to say that women are expected to perform supplementary clerical work for men.

Naturally, many women are indignant about unequal employment opportunities, but employers justify their reluctance to hire women with the fact that young women seldom stay on

their jobs. Top executives of business firms repeatedly claim that women usually work only for two or three years and then get married and settle down as full-time housewives. This is especially true among university graduates, who come to work at the age of 22 and get married at the age of 24 or 25. "Two years are just a training period," one executive sighed, and continued, "They leave at the very time when they become competent." Therefore, executives prefer to have 18-year-old senior high school graduates or 20-year-old junior college graduates, because they may be willing to work for five or six years. Indeed, young women, especially in urban middle-class strata, often admit that work is a temporary "experience in the real world." They spend two or three years, partly for fun, as an intermediate period between school and married life. Labor statistics of 1975 show that, on the average, women work only 4.3 years.

4

Employment Policies and Practices

Government agencies have attempted to stabilize youth employment, particularly through career guidance to both junior-high and senior-high graduates, who tend to be careless in their choice of occupations due to the high demand for them from prospective employers. The Employment Security Offices (ESO) urges employers to provide accurate information to enable youth to compare specific working conditions with their own characteristics and expectations before they decide which job to take. ESO also investigates this information and issues warnings to employers who do not give correct information to prospective employees. In extreme cases, ESO has refused to help recruit for irresponsible employers. Since ESO is the only official agency through which employment information is exchanged, a suspension of its information flow is a serious punishment for employers.

ESO, in cooperation with high schools, also provides a lecture series for students who are looking for jobs, and most local ESOs have a counseling section where a student can discuss his or her own work-related problems with professional counselors. The students are encouraged, at the same time, to take vocational aptitude tests, readiness tests, and other tests sponsored by ESO so that they can be more fully aware of their own potential. In 1952, ESO began to hire professional voca-

tional counselors, and by 1976 there were 581 counselors working all over Japan.

High schools are not able to afford a full-time vocational counselor; usually the head of the school is nominally in charge of educational guidance, and teachers spare some class time for counseling. But on the university level, the administration offices usually have a vocational guidance section with a small full-time staff. For example, at Keio University, one of the most famed private universities in Tokyo, 16 staff members work to coordinate student employment. Employers send recruitment announcements to this office, creating a "mini-library" for student use. Members of the staff visit companies to obtain information, transmit this information to students, respond to questions from students, and assist students in finding and applying for available jobs.

Firms seeking qualified and capable young university graduates compete in recruitment. For example, a student with high scholastic achievement in business administration or in computer science will receive job offers from a handful of large firms. These companies once even recruited the top students a year or two before their graduation. In some cases, companies "reserved" brilliant students by giving them financial assistance while they were still on the campus. This method, usually called "early harvesting," became so disturbing from an educational point of view that the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Education, and industrial organizations jointly agreed on a "recruitment embargo." In 1975, firms were permitted to start recruitment and examinations only six months before the date of graduation.

In addition to ESO and university administrations, a private organization called Japan Recruitment Center has been a very active information clearinghouse for employers and students, and at the same time gives vocational aptitude tests and personality tests for employers who do not have staff psychologists.

Each local government has schools that give specialized skill training in automobile repair, plastics, textiles, and so forth: there were 437 such training schools in 1975, and some

210,000 young people took their courses as trainees. The instructions are given free of charge, and the trainees may borrow a modest amount in monthly aid, without any interest, which they are to pay back after they get jobs. Among these 437 training schools, there are 11 schools specially designed for the physically handicapped; as of 1975, some 2,000 handicapped youths were enrolled in training programs.

The most interesting trend in vocational training in contempotary Japan, however, is the establishment and maintenance of training facilities by private industries. As of 1975, there were 365 such institutions authorized by prefectural governors. A remarkable example is Toden Gakuen of Tokyo Electric Power Co., which was authorized in 1959. Providing electricity requires highly specialized practical skills as well as solid theoretical knowledge, so the company decided to have its own training school rather than recruit regular senior high school graduates. Each spring, approximately 200 junior-high graduates (one out of four applicants) are taken into this school through a competitive examination, and for three years these young people are full-time students in the equivalent of a regular senior high school. The campus is located in a suburb of Tokyo; students live in clean dormitories, and excellent facilities are provided for various sports and extracurricular activities. Classes meet from 8:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M., and the curriculum consists of 150 units, including 100 units in history, math, English, political science, arts and so forth—the same courses in a normal high school curriculum—plus 50 units of highly technical classes on generators, transformers, civil engineering, and so on, which are indispensable in the practice of electrical work. The students in this special vocational high school are, in other words, given more knowledge and practical skill than regular senior high school students.

What makes these students even happier than regular students is the fact that their tuition fee, dormitory fee (including meals), uniform, physical education clothes, and other expenses are all taken care of by the company, and moreover, each student gets about $40 monthly as an allowance for incidental expenses. Upon completion of three years of academic work,

students get a diploma equivalent to that of a senior high school, and at the same time they are given positions in Tokyo Electric Power Co. as full-time employees. With their concentrated training, they have no difficulty in adjusting to the work situation. From their first day of appointment, they are capable of working on a construction site as junior electrical engineers.

The graduates are obligated to work for the company on a full-time basis. However, if a person is given a high evaluation by his supervisor, he can go on to a higher company-operated training school equivalent to a junior college after a minimum of three years' work. This training course provides young employees with a more sophisticated curriculum in such courses as electrical engineering, economics, applied mathematics, statistical analysis, and so on, and for a period of two years they study as full-time students. During these two years, the students are paid a monthly salary by the company as regular employees. Upon graduation from this course, the employee-students have to go back to work, but again, if they wish to, they may attend a company-operated university course after a minimum of two years' work, with arrangements similar to the junior college course. The students are paid their full salary, and on this level the curriculum is highly technical, incuding thermodynamics, atomic energy, high-voltage engineering, and computer science. After finishing their graduation thesis, these people go back to the company as supervisors, chief engineers, and other managerial personnel.

These junior college and university courses are, in spite of the excellent instruction, not formally approved by the Ministry of Education, so graduates are not given formal degrees, but within the Tokyo Electric Power Company, they are treated equally in terms of salary scale and promotion with those who graduated from other colleges and universities.

Other major electric power companies have adopted systems similar to that of Tokyo Electric Power Company. They recruit young people at the age of 15 and train them in such a way that they can attain both academic achievements and job opportunities.

In Japan, electric power companies are semi-public corpo-

rations, but many firms in the private sector have also established their own training facilities. For example, Matsushita Electric Company, the manufacturer of Panasonic products, has very intensive and extensive training programs. This company also has its own high school, but in addition to recruiting "outside" students, the company recruits 80 distinguished workers among its thousands of employees every year on the recommendation of their supervisors. The young workers selected spend a full year as trainees at the Matsushita Engineering School and are trained in mechanics—both theory and practice. Classes meet 750 hours annually, and students spend another 1,000 hours operating various new machines so that they can keep up with rapid technological innovations. Upon completion of training and final tests, they are given "skill grades" and are exempt from skill tests conducted by the government.

There are apparently many advantages in these training schools operated by private industries. On the part of management, these schools are the most reliable source of manpower, especially in view of the fact that the graduates meet so perfectly the specific demands and requirements of each firm. The morale of the young people is, for obvious reasons, much higher than that of ordinary high school students. Of course, the establishment and maintenance of this kind of school are expensive, but in the long run, management believes that the return in terms of high-quality labor will exceed the invested money. Moreover, such schools enable companies to avoid the waste, and sometimes risks, involved in recruiting regular high school graduates.

The young people who are accepted by these schools naturally see many advantages as well. First of all, they can have job security at the age of 15; companies that have their own private schools are, without exception, big organizations, so students at these schools will hardly be disappointed in the work awaiting them. Above all, students can concentrate on their academic and technical work because they are free from tuition fees and other educational expenses and they do not need to worry about the severe entrance examinations which are the major concern of the majority of regular senior high

school students. Therefore, the private technical and vocational schools are attracting the attention of competent junior high school graduates who wish to work as skilled workers with a wide range of possibilities for promotion in the future.

Local governments, under the authorization of the Ministry of Labor, conduct Skill Grade Tests for certificates in 82 different occupations involving 153 particular skills. Tests are divided into First Grade and Second Grade. In 1975, approximately 60,000 young workers took the test for the First Grade and 25,000 of them passed. For the Second Grade, 40,000 out of the 100,000 applicants qualified. Possession of a certificate increases the confidence of young people and also leads to promotion and other advantages in working conditions. Both public and private schools trainees are encouraged to take these tests; skilled workers are in high demand not only by private firms but also by the national economy at large.

Working conditions of Japanese youth are not totally protected. Labor laws in Japan prohibit the work of youth under 15 and place restrictions on employers with regard to workers under 18 in such areas as working hours, night work, sanitation, and number of paid holidays. In larger firms, the employers generally abide by these regulations, but in smaller industries working conditions are far less protected. In 1975, the Ministry of Labor discovered that 108,000 employers out of 165,000 (65 percent) violated labor laws and regulations. These employers were given warnings by public administration offices in charge of labor affairs, and some of them were legally prosecuted. The significant gap between the quality of working conditions in big industries and minor industries naturally makes youth wish to work for the former, and as a result smaller firms cannot get competent young workers. This situation creates a vicious circle: smaller businesses do not have enough qualified young workers, so they cannot increase productivity; the less successful they are, the less competent youth are willing to work for them.

Women's labor also suffers from a vicious circle. As discussed earlier, employers usually do not want women, especially university graduates, because young women often work for only three or four years and then quit their jobs when they

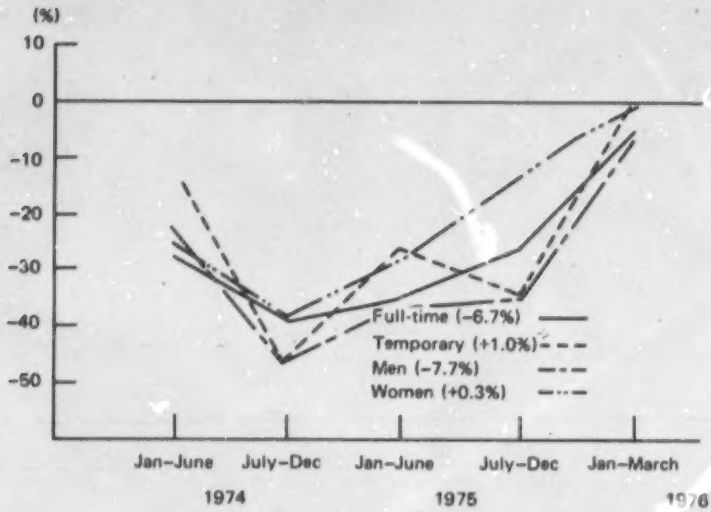
get married. There seems to be a mutual expectation between employers and young prospective female employees that the employment of women is temporary and auxiliary to men's work. In fact, in certain banking businesses and trading companies, women are employed on the condition that they retire at the age of 30. The implication is that women over 30 have no opportunity for promotion to executive positions, and employers are not willing to pay high salaries to women of that age. Also, there is a traditional sociopsychological tendency to look upon female workers as "the flowers of the office." In the department stores of Japan, for instance, employers assume that customers expect only charming young women to serve them; this assumption may be unwarranted, existing only in the minds of the employers.

All of these assumptions about working women seem to be accepted by the women themselves. Many young women persuade themselves that they are needed only as temporary and auxiliary workers, and this makes them much less motivated than men, which in turn justifies the employers' tendency to hire young women on the assumption that they will not work for long. In a word, women are generally regarded as a temporary, flexible, and cheaper source of labor which employers can draw on as they wish.

Ironically, women's temporary labor has been in high demand in times of economic recession. Figure 3 shows the changes in labor demand during recession compared with previous years. As is apparent from the figure, the labor demand for men in July–December 1974 was 46.5 percent less than that of the same period of 1973, probably the worst in the past decade, and recovery of employment for men has been very slow, although the figure came up to 7.7 percent in January–March 1976. In contrast, the recovery of the demand for female workers and temporary workers was quite remarkable. It attained +0.3 percent and +1.0 percent respectively, early in 1976, while the recovery rate was still minus for men and full-time workers. It is safe to conclude that employers wanted to hire temporary female workers because they were more flexible and less expensive than full-time male workers.

Indeed, temporary hiring of women has become more and

Figure 3. Changes in labor demand, 1974–1976



more popular in recent years, especially since 1960. On the one hand, there are many employers looking for flexible labor because of the fluctuating economy; on the other hand, there are many women, including housewives, who can spare a few hours a day and are willing to earn extra income. Therefore, a small sewing firm, for instance, may circulate an announcement in its neighborhood saying that the firm needs several part-time workers for certain periods of time, a few hours a day, with modest pay. The work in this case may be simple sewing, and it is not difficult for the firm to recruit housewives in the neighborhood.

Part-time female labor of this kind became so popular that recommendations were made by advisory committees to the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Social Welfare in 1969 aimed at protecting part-time female workers. It is encouraging, in recent years, to see independent and professional women working in many sectors of society, though their number is still very small. But it remains important to cut the vicious circle not only by raising the status of women but also by training more professionally capable female workers. This is an area where more policy measures must be taken in the future.

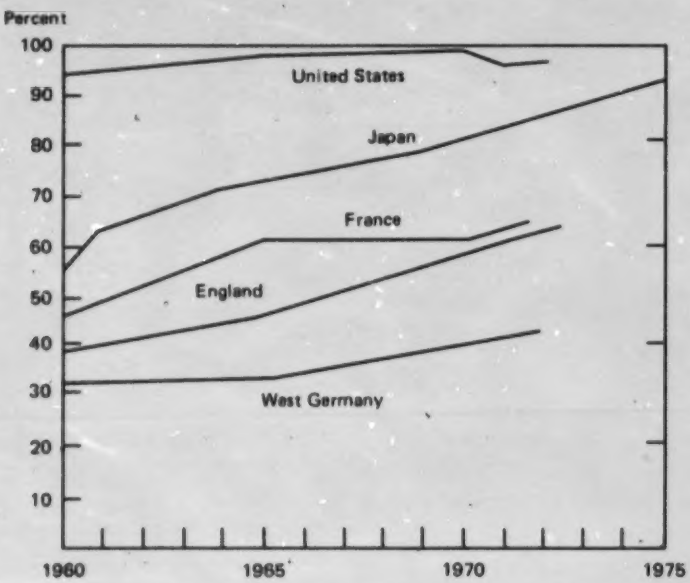
5

Impact of Changes in Education

As discussed in Chapter 2, the great majority of junior high school graduates—those who finish compulsory education—choose to attend senior high school. Indeed, senior high school education in Japan today is, at least culturally, semicompulsory. Figure 4 indicates the speed of the growth of advanced education in Japan in comparison with other major industrial countries. It is quite possible that during the coming decade, the youths who enter senior high school upon completion of compulsory education will reach virtually 100 percent. And in spite of the heavy learning load, most of those who enter senior high school will finish. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Education, in 1975, 97.1 percent of the youths who had entered senior high school three years earlier graduated. In other words, the rate of high school dropouts was only 2.9 percent. As will be discussed in Chapter 7 some of these dropouts become involved in juvenile delinquency and crimes, but it should be noted that the drop-out rate in Japan is amazingly low in comparison with other industrial countries.

The drop-out rate is relatively low on the university level as well. Among those who entered colleges and universities in 1969, 79.1 percent graduated in 1973, and an additional 8.8 percent graduated in 1974 after studying an extra year. The rate varies by departments: generally speaking, students in natural sciences found normal graduation after four years of study

Figure 4. Percentage of junior high school students who entered senior high school, selected countries, 1960–1975



Source: Japan, Ministry of Education (1976), p. 32.

much more difficult (in physics, for instance, only 60 percent graduated in 1973) than the students in humanities (the highest being home economics—nearly 90 percent). These figures mean that more than 10 percent of those who entered the university dropped out, although some of them might have graduated in their sixth year. The percentage of university students who graduate after the normal four years of study, however, has been declining. For 1974 graduates, the percentage was 78.4 percent, and for 1975 graduates, it dropped to 75.0 percent. In other words, as their number increases, college and university students find it increasingly difficult to graduate.

Furthermore, as indicated earlier, even those who graduate face increasing difficulty finding jobs appropriate to their educational backgrounds. It is an embarrassing experience for a

philosophy major to take a job as an automobile salesman, or for an economics major to work for a primary school. Of course, a fortunate few still obtain "elite" careers as government officials or as junior executives in a big steel or chemical company, but for the majority of university graduates, the job opportunities are not as they (or their parents) expected. The person seeking a secure occupation may find it wiser to take more practical vocational training rather than go to a liberal arts college.

In order to cope with this particular new problem of education vis-à-vis employment, in July 1975, a new law was passed by parliament amending the School Education Law to give official recognition to professional schools as alternatives for postsecondary education, and partially to subsidize these professional schools with government funds.

Under Japanese law, in addition to the official schools there is a category called *Kakushu Gakko*, meaning "miscellaneous schools." This category includes cooking schools, driving schools, flower-arrangement classes, foreign-language schools, sewing schools, accounting schools, and many others. These schools are under local jurisdiction and are simply approved by local authorities. They are easy to establish, and for the general public, including young people, it is easy to get accepted, usually without entrance examination. Upon completion, students acquire a certificate for the particular skills attained, but these certificates are not equivalent to the formal diplomas which accredited high schools, colleges, and universities give to their graduates. In 1975, there were 8,000 major "miscellaneous schools" scattered all over Japan with 1,200,000 students, the majority of whom were young people. The parliamentary amendment of 1975 classified some of these "miscellaneous schools" as "professional schools," placing them under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education.

Professional schools, as defined by law, are educational institutions whose goal is "to promote the abilities necessary for various professions and/or for everyday practice," and there are three minimum requirements: (1) a professional school must give at least one year of continuous education; (2) it must give

more than 800 hours instruction; and (3) it must have a minimum of 40 full-time students. A professional school which takes junior high school graduates is called a "professional high school," and one which accepts senior high school graduates is simply called a "professional school." The law also defines the qualifications of teaching staff. For a "professional high school," teachers must have (1) at least four years of teaching experience during school, (2) at least two years of experience after graduation from junior college, or (3) a B. A. degree. For "professional schools," teachers must have (1) at least six years of research or teaching experience, (2) at least two years teaching experience after graduation from universities, or (3) an M. A. degree.

When a school meets these requirements, the Ministry of Education gives its authorization, which is accompanied by various privileges. For example, an authorized professional school is eligible to receive long-term, low-interest loans from a foundation subsidized by the government. Such a school is also exempt from most national and local taxation, and its students are allowed to purchase commuting tickets from Japan National Railways at a discount.

The graduates of authorized professional schools are given diplomas which qualify them as professionally trained people and which are advantageous when the graduates look for jobs. For instance, a professional-school graduate trained in shorthand will without doubt be hired as a professional stenographer; in fact it is very likely that a business executive would prefer such a professional stenographer to a university graduate who majored in Greek philosophy or Chinese literature. In a word, these new schools are designed to meet the demands for a professionally trained labor force.

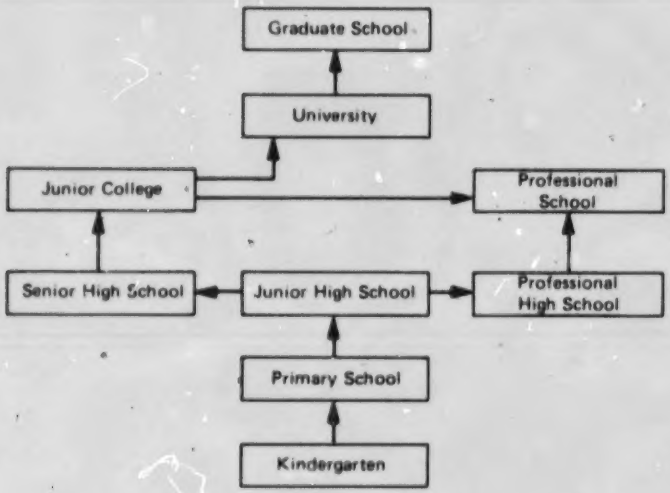
The establishment of new professional institutions does not imply, of course, that the government has shifted emphasis from the regular institutionalized school system to more practical professional education. Rather, it has shifted from a monolithic educational philosophy to a pluralistic view of education. By establishing and encouraging professional schools, the Ministry of Education seems to be reshaping the model of the educa-

tional system in Japan. Figure 5 shows the emerging system—a system which means more alternatives for advanced education in Japan.

As far as employment opportunities are concerned, even before the authorization of the professional schools in 1975, certain "miscellaneous schools" demonstrated that they provided expert training and promoted high achievement in many professional areas. For example, graduates of a baking school in Tokyo were in extremely high demand. Major hotels, restaurants, and pastry shops had been suffering from a shortage of expert manpower, and these establishments competed with each other to recruit the graduates of this particular school.

Business managers, too, are tending to reconsider the "manpower mix." As a matter of fact, business consultants have discovered that firms which had been so eager to recruit the graduates of big-name universities were overloaded with executives. These executives were well educated, of course, but they did not want to work as supervisors of factory work. They were

Figure 5. Patterns of progression of students through educational system



even reluctant to work for the sales department. Being "elite," these people took it for granted that the only positions appropriate for them were managerial posts in the headquarters office. As a result, these firms became "top heavy" and less productive. The consultants suggested that it was a management illusion to think that young men who achieved excellent academic grades were also men of highly motivated talents in business. Therefore, the consultants proposed a better "manpower mix" of university graduates, high school graduates, and professional school graduates as indispensable to improve productivity and morale in a business firm. One successful example is the case of Panasonic. Of the 26 members of its board of directors, only 12 were university graduates; the rest, including the president, had finished only compulsory education. Thus, the newly instituted professional schools are promising both in terms of solid job opportunities for graduates and in terms of morale and self-awareness of students.

Indeed, by definition, the goals of professional school students are more sharply focused than those of liberal arts students. They know what they are and what they can and will be, while the self-images of liberal arts college students are more or less ambiguous. Like the trainee-students of the electric power company discussed in Chapter 4, students in certain professional schools are very confident about their particular skill and talent, and many employers look forward to hiring professionally trained young people along with, if not instead of, graduates of regular colleges and universities.

It is important to note that, compared with "regular" educational institutions, professional schools are extraordinarily flexible in their adaptation to changing societal needs. For example, two decades ago, when the computer emerged, a "miscellaneous school" specializing in computer sciences was established. The school attracted not only future-oriented young people but also mid-career business executives. Those who completed the course became the first Japanese people literate in the new technology. Such an instantaneous, flexible response could hardly be expected of "regular" schools. Indeed,

it was at least ten years before major universities set up courses in computer science, partly in response to the computer courses established in the less prestigious "miscellaneous school." Universities, as many critics have said, are so rigid and conservative that they are often unable to cope with innovations, technological as well as sociocultural. In this sense, some professional schools may be seen as innovators in education. As of 1977, there are 152 authorized professional schools in Tokyo and more than 400 all over Japan.

One of the most neglected segments of the young population in Japan today is the small number of young men and women working in the agricultural sector of the economy. Rapid urbanization and industrialization, coupled with mechanized farming, have significantly decreased the agricultural population in general and the number of young farmers in particular over the past two decades. Government agencies, especially the Ministry of Agriculture, have been making efforts to provide training opportunities for youths in rural communities.

One of the first steps was the inauguration in 1968 of the Farmers' University, a subsidiary of the Ministry of Agriculture. Every year, 50 senior high school graduates under 25 (male only) with a minimum of one year's practical experience in farming are admitted to the university, where for three years they are trained in both the theory and practice of modern agriculture. All students live together in dormitories, and the cost is totally subsidized by the government. In addition to the Farmers' University, there are 318 training centers of various types for young farmers. Among these, 56 are devoted to intensive agricultural education at the senior-high or college level, and students are trained for a year or two on a full-time basis. These training centers are all public, and operated mostly under the auspices of local governments. In 1976, some 4,200 young people were being trained at these centers at a cost to the government of approximately $1 million.

Furthermore, the national government offers financial aid to encourage young farmers to succeed their parents on the

family farm instead of migrating into industrial urban areas. For instance, young farmers interested in trying some new agricultural technology or crop can borrow $700 to cover the expenses of their education and experiments. The loan must be paid back within three years, but at no interest. When a young farmer decides to start a new agricultural venture, a government loan of $6,000 is available. This loan also is interest free, and repayment must be completed within five years. In 1975, another financial-aid program for young farmers was established. Under this program, a young farmer can get $1,800 while he is trained either in training centers or at qualified farms. Again, the loan is to be repaid in five years, and no interest is charged. In 1976, these special loans totaled almost $35 million.

Similar policies were adopted, in terms of both training facilities and financial aid, for youth in other areas of the primary sector of economy, such as forestry and fishing. The growth of government subsidies in these fields has been significant in recent years.

In another effort to encourage young workers, both in agriculture and industry, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Labor, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are conducting international exchange programs. In 1975, 75 selected young farmers between the ages of 18 and 30 with high school educations were sent to the United States (47), Canada (5), and western European countries (23). These farmers spent a year on foreign farms to study modern farming technology and to bring back their experiences to their own farms in Japan. Also, since 1968, bilateral exchange programs for young factory workers have been established with the United States and West Germany. In 1975, 13 skilled young workers between the ages of 21 and 29 were selected and sent to these countries.

On a different level, the Prime Minister's Office charters a passenger boat called "The Youth" every year and conducts a cruising tour in the Pacific, mostly in the Southeast Asia area, for six weeks. In 1975, some 350 young people joined this tour to improve their international understanding. The tour is fully

subsidized by the government and the participants must be young workers between 20 and 24. Students are excluded from this program. Though the number of youths who participate in these programs is very small, there is no doubt that the existence of the programs is very encouraging for millions of working youths.

6

Access and Equality of Education

With the growth of the GNP, per capita income in Japan has also increased in the past two decades. The ratio of disposable income to total earning of each household and each individual has also risen. The income-tax policy, with its heavy emphasis on progressive taxation, has succeeded in shaping Japan as a typical middle-income, middle-class society. The distribution of income among the population is represented by an almost perfect normal curve, the median being approximately U.S. $10,000 per year. The consumer market has been showing tremendous expansion, and the distributive sector of the Japanese economy is dynamic and expanding.

However, by definition, a normal curve means that there are many households in which income is below average. For those in the lower to middle income bracket, the relative cost of education for their children is very high, and it may be safe to infer that many young people who take jobs at the age of 15 are the children of these lower-income families. Moreover, with the rise of education costs, even middle-income families often find it difficult to finance their children's education. As a matter of fact, government statistics show that, on the average, parents must pay at least $50 per year for a public primary school child to cover miscellaneous expenses.

The cost of higher education, especially at the university level, has become more and more expensive, and it is not unusual to find tuition fees of over $1,500 per academic year among the more expensive private universities. In addition, parents often must buy school bonds, contribute to the construction of new buildings, and so forth. Therefore, when students are accepted by a university, they or their parents must be prepared to pay up to $2,000 a year altogether. According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education in 1974, a student in an average private university paid $900 in tuition fees and $1,200 for housing and living expenses, and considering the incredible inflation that took place after 1974, there is no doubt that a student in a private university today would have to have a minimum of at least $2,000 a year and in many cases far more. This, of course, creates a very heavy burden for the student's parents.

Moreover, there has been an ironic development in the relationship between social class and type of university. As discussed earlier, Japanese national universities were founded in order to recruit competent young people, regardless of their family backgrounds. This tradition has continued until today, and the tuition fee of the national universities remains extremely low—a nominal amount of $200 per year—which most households in contemporary Japan can afford. However, recently it was discovered that the majority of the students at national universities came from middle- or upper-middle-class families with annual incomes exceeding $20,000. The reason is that in upper-middle-class households, each child is given not only his or her own private room but also all necessary study aids, including good private tutors. As a result, these privileged young people tend to have an advantage in the competitive entrance examination to national universities, especially in Tokyo and Kyoto. Those children less privileged in terms of living conditions are likely to fail the examination and therefore go to private universities where tuition and other expenses are much higher than those of national institutions. In a word, the trend indicates that the children of well-to-do families have

more opportunities to enter inexpensive and prestigious universities, while youths in the lower social strata are more or less obliged to go to expensive private universities.

This is the reverse of the popular image of national and private universities of a few decades ago. Formerly, the image of a national university student was that of the brilliant young person from lower social strata with high aspiration, while a private university student was the son of a wealthy family. The underprivileged, bright young man was compensated for his social handicap by inexpensive tuition fees at the national university, in contrast to the privileged young man of the upper class, who attended expensive private institutions. An invisible equalizing effect was working in the division between public and private educational institutions. But in recent years, the equalizer does not appear to be working.

In view of the higher cost of education and the financial difficulties of students, not only in college and universities but also in junior high schools, the Japan Scholarship Foundation, a government subsidiary, has been expanding its financial-aid program for underprivileged young people. On the senior high school level, a student is qualified to apply for a scholarship of $150 to $260 a year if his or her family's annual income is below $12,500. On the university level, children of families with income of less than $15,500 are eligible to apply for a scholarship of $500 to $1,000 per year. Special arrangements are made for working students who are taking courses in correspondence universities. In their case, a maximum of $2,000 is awarded as a scholarship. In 1976, the Japan Scholarship Foundation spent $160 million, and the number of student recipients was approximately 330,000.

Even though the scholarship programs help many young students, the absolute amount of money they receive each month is far from sufficient, and students often have to look for other financial sources to supplement scholarships and allowances given by their parents. As mentioned before, some 80 percent of college and university students have part-time jobs, known among students as "arbeit." The most desired but most

difficult job to obtain is that of private tutor for primary or junior high school students. Children's admission to a prestigious university is the ultimate goal for many parents, if not for the children themselves, so good private tutors are desired among urban middle- and upper-middle-class families. because private tutorial instructions by qualified university students may mean a great advantage during the entrance examination. A student who can get this kind of job may earn something like $3.00 an hour, 30 to 50 hours a month. Indeed, looking at this private tutorial market, one may feel that a quasi-Keynesian economy is in action: on the one hand are students at the age of 21 or 22 who have passed the entrance examination to the university, and on the other hand are millions of young people between the age of 10 and 17 who hope to succeed in the severe competition. Thus the universities and their students expand the market for tutorial services. But here again, a social irony emerges. For obvious reasons, parents prefer as tutors students of good national universities; therefore, those who are privileged to begin with are also more privileged in this particular job market. Though private tutorial service is not organized as an "industry," simple calculation demonstrates that the aggregate earnings from tutorial service amount to at least $10 million each year.

Of university students working part time, 24 percent are private tutors. The remaining "arbeiters" are either clerical or unskilled laborers, who work mostly during summer vacation. However, it is important to note that approximately 15 percent of university students are working on a full-time basis. For some of them, means often turn out to be ends, and Japanese university administration officers are familiar with students whose names are registered but who scarcely ever show up in person. As seen in Chapter 5, more than 10 percent of those who are admitted do not complete their course, and it is very likely that a considerable portion of these dropouts overlap with students working full time. Indeed, it seems that the boom in higher education has placed an unbearable economic burden on many students' (or their parents') shoulders. High aspiration coupled

with the conformity psychology in higher education is fine, but one must also have a solid economic basis on which to materialize this aspiration.

Article 26 of the Japanese Constitution states that "All people shall have the right to receive an equal education correspondent to their ability, as provided by Law," and young people in economic difficulty may claim that they have a constitutional right for their handicaps to be compensated. The scholarship programs discussed earlier are only one of many efforts to provide access to higher education for less privileged young people.

There is an unusual institution through which working youths can earn senior high school as well as university-level credits through correspondence. NHK (the public broadcasting system) started a special educational radio program in 1953 and a television program in 1960. By law, if a person wants to obtain a senior high school diploma, he or she must send an application to an organization called the NHK Gakuen (NHK School) and pay a very modest tuition fee. There is no entrance examination, and a student receives textbooks and other instructional materials from the headquarters of the school. The broadcast curriculum is identical to that given at regular high schools and meets the requirements and regulations of the Ministry of Education. On weekdays, NHK broadcasts the special program from 9:00 to 11:00 P.M. over its educational television channel and from 8:00 to 11:00 P.M. over the radio. For the convenience of students, a certain number of hours are broadcast every Sunday as well.

The students, mostly working youth, watch and listen to these programs after working hours, taking notes and consulting textbooks and other printed materials. They are expected to spend another hour or two on homework. The programs are scheduled in such a way that students can be exposed to eight different subjects. Students may send their questions to the headquarters, where a teaching staff answers them. NHK Gakuen is affiliated with some 70 high schools all over Japan, and correspondence students may come for "schooling" in these schools on specified dates, usually for a few days at a

time. The "schooling" allows students and instructors to have some personal exchange of ideas and feedback, which they cannot experience through impersonal broadcasts. After watching or listening to the programs and participating in the "schooling" sessions, the students take tests to earn credits. As already seen, the number of youths who leave school after the junior-high level has considerably decreased; among this minority, it is estimated that more than 50 percent now take senior high school correspondence courses. This is only one of the alternatives for those who cannot go on to the "normal" senior high school.

Interestingly, the average age of students in correspondence schools has gone up, and at present is 25. The reason is that many middle-aged people missed educational opportunities during World War II and still wish to acquire higher education. A housewife at the age of 45 who was unable to attend high school 30 years ago may be interested in widening her knowledge, for her, the correspondence high school provides a precious second chance. In a word, correspondence high schools serve not only 15-year-olds who cannot afford a senior-high education but also the older generation who missed opportunities in the past.

On the university level as well there are social devices through which underprivileged youth can attain a formal B.A. diploma. Japanese education law permits university-level instruction by correspondence. Under this arrangement, a person with a senior high school diploma or equivalent is admitted as a student and must earn 124 units for credit during a five-year course. Sixteen universities and eight junior colleges in Japan today offer correspondence courses. Here again, there is no entrance examination, and students are admitted on a first-come, first-served basis. Once admitted, students receive textbooks and other printed materials for study and are given assignments by a tutor. The assigned written papers must be sent to the tutors, who make comments, give advice, and send the papers back to the students. The students and instructors communicate continuously through correspondence. The tutorial instructors are the regular teaching staff of the universities; the correspondence course is an extra load for the professors, but the univer-

sity pays an extra honorarium accordingly. The textbooks and other reference materials used by correspondence students are identical to those used by regular students. In that sense, there is practically no difference, in either the status or treatment, between regular students and correspondence students, except that the latter have to spend five years instead of four, while the tuition fee for the correspondence course is much less than that for regular students. Because of the flexible time schedule, a working youth who wishes to achieve university-level education often finds correspondence universities convenient and rewarding. In 1974, there were approximately 150,000 students in correspondence universities, of whom 40 percent were women. Here again, there are many middle-aged students who wanted to recover opportunities missed in the 1940s.

However, one should not be overly optimistic about correspondence universities. In the first place, under the law, correspondence students are obliged to earn at least one-quarter of their credits (30) in residence, which means that they should be on campus for a period of intensive personal instruction. In order to fulfill this requirement, a correspondence student must be a full-time regular student for a period of two or three weeks at least. For many working youths, this requirement is very difficult to achieve, because with few exceptions, employers do not want their employees to leave their jobs for weeks. Civil servants who want to take a degree in law school are encouraged to take leave for "schooling" and are even protected by regulation in doing so. But young workers in the private sector, even if they study very hard on assignments at home, seldom can achieve a degree because of the difficulty of getting the required leave of absence from their jobs.

Moreover, in spite of the fact that the students of correspondence universities are, upon completion of their credit work, awarded a formal B.A. degree, their degree is often regarded as "lower" than that of regular students at four-year colleges and universities, without reason. Graduates of correspondence universities thus still find themselves socially handicapped, and consequently, for those who wish to use a B.A. degree as a "ticket to success," correspondence universities are a somewhat frustrating experience. Financial aid to correspon-

dence universities from the Ministry of Education is also far from sufficient.

In order to solve the problem of university-level education not being able to meet the "popular demand" and to provide equal access and opportunities for the general public who wish to get a university education, the Ministry of Education finally decided to start a Broadcasting University, an independent educational institution utilizing the most sophisticated television technology. Kato and Postgate (1975) studied this new university for UNESCO and made the following observation (pp. 242–243):

> The aim of the Broadcasting University is "to cultivate a capacity for understanding problems, the intelligence to solve them and a creative policy to plan for the future in changing world." If the plan goes ahead, this will be achieved through a degree course lasting for a minimum of four years, composed of three terms of 15 weeks, with broadcast programs on seven days a week for the first two years. . . . Initially the university will operate only in the densely populated Kanto area (in which Tokyo is situated) and in one rural area. An initial entry of 8,000 is contemplated, building up to a student population of 40,000 in four years. Expansion into other areas will depend upon the experience of the first year.

The inauguation of the Broadcasting University was originally scheduled for 1976 but was postponed until 1979. Despite its being a grand public investment which can be only partially redeemed through tuition fees, it is now definite that this new institution will materialize. One of the most important aspects of the Broadcasting University, however, is that its goal is to renovate—if not revolutionalize—the conventional curriculum of the traditional university. The students will have a much wider choice of elective subjects, and the courses will be interdisciplinary and free from conventional departmentalization. The success of the Broadcasting University may contribute not only to a new equalizing effect but also to a breakthrough in the traditional and often stagnant university system in Japan.

7

Values and Deviants

A survey conducted by the prime minister's office in 1975 revealed that the majority of youths today, quite in contrast with their popular image, were more or less satisfied with what they were and with the conditions under which they lived. As Table 2 shows, to the question "Are you satisfied with your present life?" 19.8 percent answered "Yes, very much" and another 53.8 percent said "Yes, mostly." Only 21 percent answered "Not so much," and 4.9 percent that they were "Dissatisfied." The data also show that men are less satisfied than women and that the older group (20–24) are more dissatisfied than the younger group (15–19). These figures indicate, however, that youths today are less frustrated than the public tends (or wants) to perceive. Indeed, it seems that any

Table 2. Degree of satisfaction of young people, 1975

		Very much	*Mostly*	*Not so much*	*Dissatisfied*	*No Response*
Total		19.8	53.8	21.0	4.9	0.4
Men		18.4	50.7	24.9	5.8	0.3
Women		21.0	56.3	17.9	4.3	0.6
Men	15-19	21.5	48.5	23.6	5.8	0.5
	20-24	14.3	53.5	26.5	5.7	–
Women	15-19	23.4	54.4	17.2	4.4	0.6
	20-24	18.6	58.2	18.6	4.1	0.5

SOURCE: Japan, Office of the Prime Minister

basis for the stereotypical image of "rebellious youth" has almost disappeared, replaced by "soft" young people. The replacement of rebellious youths by gentle young people can be seen from other data. In 1970, a survey revealed that 24.1 percent of youths answered "Yes" to the question, "Do you have any worries," but in 1975, the percentage significantly declined to 14.1 percent.

The widely publicized "generation gap" also seems to have become less serious in recent years. Again, according to a series of surveys by the prime minister's office to the question "Do you talk with your father often?" 51.8 percent of the youths answered "Yes," in 1975, while the figure was only 45.6 percent in 1970. Youths are found to talk more with their mothers: to the similar question about mothers, in 1975, 81.1 percent of young people said "Yes," while the figure in 1970 was 78.6 percent. If the frequency of conversation with parents is an index of the depth of the generation gap, then it is safe to say that the "gap" is much narrower than people usually expect. Indeed, it is rather surprising that in 1975 only 3.1 percent never talked with their fathers and only 1.1 percent never talked with mothers.

One implication of the changes in these figures is that youths in 1970 were different from their succeeding age group. Indeed, youths 20 to 24 in 1970, who were born sometime between 1946 and 1950 were products of the "baby boom," and their life histories and the sociohistorical context in which they lived were dramatically different from those of younger youth groups, as Table 3 indicates.

Two characteristics are obvious. In the first place, the "baby boom" generation was poorly accommodated by society in comparison with succeeding generations. Though their childhood experience was incomparably better than that of preceding groups, who suffered from severe food shortages and poor housing, the "baby boom" generation still had to carry a slight stigma of the postwar period. Their parents, who are in their 50s to early 60s, were the generation who spent their adolescence during the war and had little opportunity for education. Above all, these parents experienced a drastic change in their

Table 3. Selected data for young people born in 1946–1950, 1951–1957 and 1958–1963, Japan

Item	*Age in 1977 and period of birth*		
	27 to 31 years born 1946–50	*20 to 26 years born 1951–57*	*15 to 19 years born 1958–63*
Number (in millions)	2.7	1.8	1.6
Infant mortality rate	61.7%	44.6%	30.7%
Attendance rate in kindergarten	20.1%	31.1%	47.2%
Primary school class size (number of pupils)	31.7	29.2	25.8
Index of household power consumption	54.6	77.9	100.0
Television ownership	15.9%	91.2%	99.0%
Senior high school attendance rate	70.6%	81.6%	91.0%
Percentage born in urban areas	59.0%	60.0%	67.0%
College and university attendance rate	22.2%	37.5%	–
Per capita daily calorie consumption	2,068	2,106	2,273
Woman as percentage of university students	22.5%	31.6%	–

value system in 1945, and therefore could not be, and still cannot be, confident about themselves as well as about the education of their children.

Furthermore, the "baby boom" generation is exceptional in the sense that they were babies of the radical, "pure" democracy. They were exposed to the extremely idealistic philosophy of democracy brought from the West, especially the United States. The new constitution guaranteed freedom and equality and abolished military power; the constitution, most idealistically interpreted, has been the "Bible" for this generation. Teachers in the classroom taught these ideals with extraordinary zeal, and children readily accepted them. The parents were in ideological confusion and unable to give proper instruction to their children. Some of the children of this generation even

condemned their parents in the name of democracy and in this sense appeared to be "angry young men."

In addition, this generation experienced heavy psychological pressures from sheer density: their absolute number was 2.7 million; and they found that their lives were extremely competitive, both in school and in employment. This age group was destined to feel as if they were permanently packed in a commuter subway at rush hour. Indeed, in the late 1960s, observers commented on the physical overflow of students in the major urban universities. Classrooms were overcrowded, libraries were packed, and campus cafeterias had not nearly enough seats. Unable to go anywhere, the students who missed seats even in neighborhood coffee shops had to spend their lunch times on the street.

The sense of overcrowdedness combined with democratic idealism to lead this generation easily to overall frustration and resetment. The violent campus unrest that took place in Japanese universities in 1968–1970 may have its origin in the demographic, sociopsychological, and ideological characteristics of the students of the day. As a matter of fact, it is noteworthy that without exception, the radical activists, including the internationally notorious "Japan Red Army," who engaged in the bloody massacre at Tel Aviv, belong to this particular age group. The occasional terrorism still taking place in Japan is committed by criminals (or suspects) whose ages range from 29 to 33, the former "radical youth" of 1968. At the present time, they find themselves to be "radical early middle-age." An important point here is that this age group failed to recruit any younger followers. Naturally they appealed to the younger age groups to strengthen their power, but these age groups generally were negative. The reason is apparent from the data in Table 3. The potential younger followers, in their teens and twenties, are more satisfied with what they are and what they imagine they will be. Their parents, in their 40s or early 50s, were more adaptable to the postwar situation than the parents of the "baby boom" generation, so that better communication and continuities were established between parents and children. The children who were born after 1951, and especially those

borne after 1958, are less frustrated in many respects. The feeling of density is reduced among this group – they find more "elbow room," both in the physical and in the psychological sense. In terms of economic conditions, these younger people feel more secure than preceding age groups. The following figures show the percentage of young people whose families are troubled by low income.

	1970	*1975*
Total	22.0%	15.6%
Men	25.2	19.9
Women	18.7	12.3

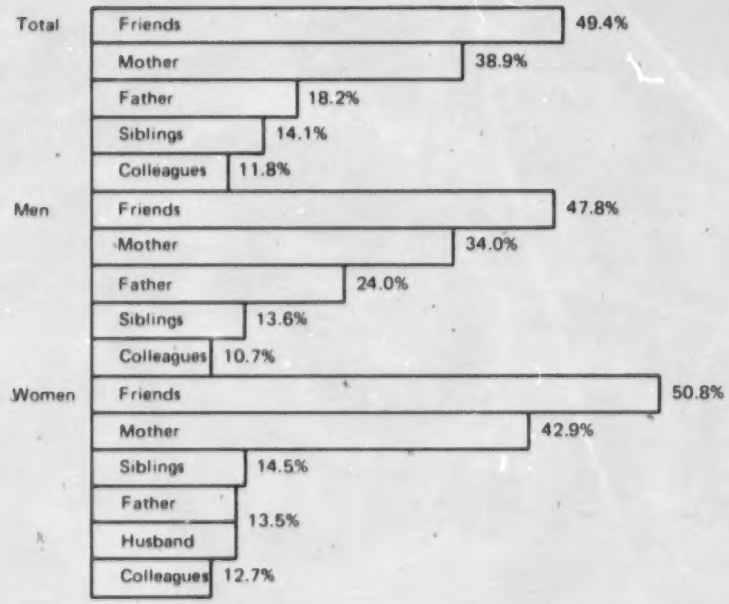
The problem of low income declined considerably from 1970 to 1975. However, among younger age groups, the impact of the mass media is much stronger than it was on preceding age groups. Younger people in their teens and early twenties today are the children of electronic media. They have been exposed to television since birth, and their parents half jokingly and half seriously regard television as a free babysitter. According to a survey by Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK), the public broadcasting corporation, in 1976 young people between the ages of 16 and 19 spent 2 hours and 13 minutes watching television on weekdays and 3 hours and 58 minutes on Sundays – 20 percent more than the hours spent in television viewing in 1970. There is no doubt, thought it is difficult to prove, that the behavior of youths today is more or less influenced by the messages of the mass media, especially the electronic audiovisual media. And as in many other countries, the values transmitted by mass media often conflict with the values taught at home and in school, so it is quite probable that the conflicts internalized in each individual young person may create yet another psychological problem for the younger generation. (See Kato, 1977, for an extensive study of communication regulations designed to protect the youth from undesirable media content, such as sex and violence.)

The young people of Japan today also seem to look to

their peers as a source of reassurance. About 73.8 percent of young men and 81.7 percent of young women in Japan today express a definite desire to have close friends with whom they can talk about anything frankly. It is interesting to note that the need for such close friends is felt more among the 20 to 24 age group than the 15 to 19 age group for men, and the pattern of this need is reversed among women.

The peer group seems to function as the dominant frame of reference for young people. The *White Paper on Youth* revealed that, in case of trouble, young people today tend to consult with their close friends rather than with their parents. Figure 6 shows the distribution of the sources of personal consultation among youth. (The respondents were permitted

Figure 6. Responses to the question "To whom do you talk about your troubles?" (1976)



Source: Japan, Office of the Prime Minister (1976).

to nominate more than one source, so that the total exceeds 100 percent.) The psychological intimacy that youth feel with their friends is often very close: 36.4 percent of women and 30.3 percent of men feel that friends are much closer than parents, whereas 24.8 percent of women and 23.5 percent of men think that the psychological distance from friends is almost the same as that from parents. In other words, among many young people today, the people who belong to the same age group are considered the most reliable source of self-assurance and psychological security. Assuming that the common knowledge that youth share with their friends is gathered from the media, it seems that they are oriented toward their horizontal contemporaries rather than toward vertical transgeneration relationships. In this particular sense, there is an apparent "generation gap."

However, the ideal image of parents held by today's youth shows strikingly different attitudes toward the preferred roles of fathers and mothers, as seen in Table 4. The majority of youths are inclined to see their fathers as active in work, while they want to see their mothers engaged in domestic affairs. But

Table 4. Ideal images of parents held by young people in Japan, 1975

The ideal image of father	
Absolutely devoted to occupational life	12.6%
More concerned with occupation than family life	35.3%
More concerned with family life than occupation	38.7%
Devoted to family life	12.3%
No answer	0.8%
The ideal image of mother	
Absolutely devoted to family life	58.2%
More concerned with family than with social activities	37.3%
More concerned with social activities than family life	2.0%
Devoted to social activities	2.1%
No answer	0.4%

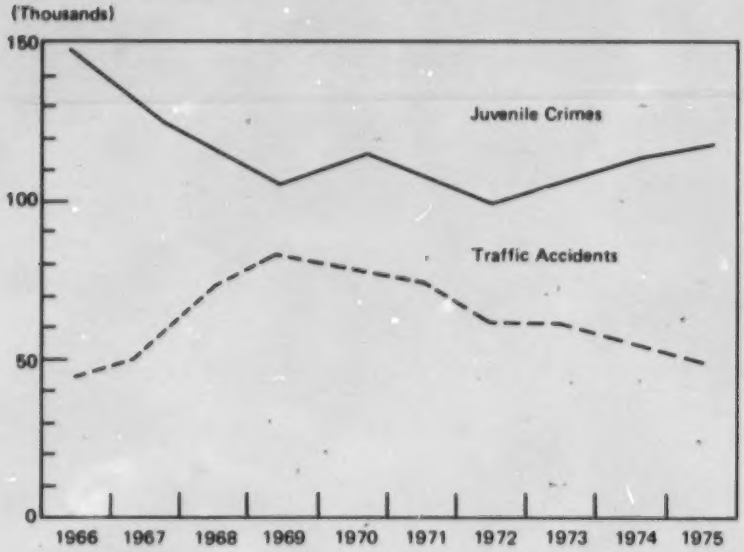
SOURCE: Japan, Office of the Prime Minister (1976), pp. 298–299.

it is important to note that 38.7 percent of the youths hold the ideal image of a father who gives priority to family life over occupational life. Indeed, altogether, the ideal image of the father in Japan is quite domestic. Lacking statistical data for the past, a historical comparison cannot be made here; but until a decade ago, the ideal image of a Japanese father was that of a man devoted to social and occupational service, and it may be safe to say that the ideal image has made a significant recent shift from a job-oriented image to a family-oriented one.

These images are very likely projections of the values held by youth concerning themselves. According to a survey conducted by the Japan Recruitment Center in 1974, to the question "Where is the happiness in your life?" 48.8 percent of young men and 41.6 percent of young women answered "challenging job" while 42.0 percent of men and 54.1 percent of women said "family life"; family-oriented youths are as prevalent as job-oriented youth. Indeed, there seems to have been a shift of values from a hard-working life-style to the new life-style in which a happy family life dominates. Japanese journalists often refer to this tendency as the "new family" or "my home-ism."

The incidence of juvenile crime and delinquency among Japanese youths has varied markedly in recent years. The number of youths who committed crimes declined until 1972 but moved upward from 1972 to 1975. Traffic accidents involving human injury peaked in 1969 and since then has steadily decreased (Figure 7). Among juvenile crimes, according to a 1976 statement by police headquarters, violent crimes such as burglary and rape have decreased significantly in the past two years, but theft, especially the stealing of automobiles and motorcycles, has increased. It is also clear that more female crime and delinquency have been discovered in recent years. The number of young women under 20 who were arrested by the police in 1975 was about 11,000, a 10.2 percent increase over the previous year, the comparable number was only 8,500 in 1969. Also significantly, in 1975 most of the juvenile crimes were committed by young people between the ages of 14 and

Figure 7. Juvenile crimes and traffic accidents involving youths, 1966–1975



Source: Japan, Office of the Prime Minister (1976), p. 117.

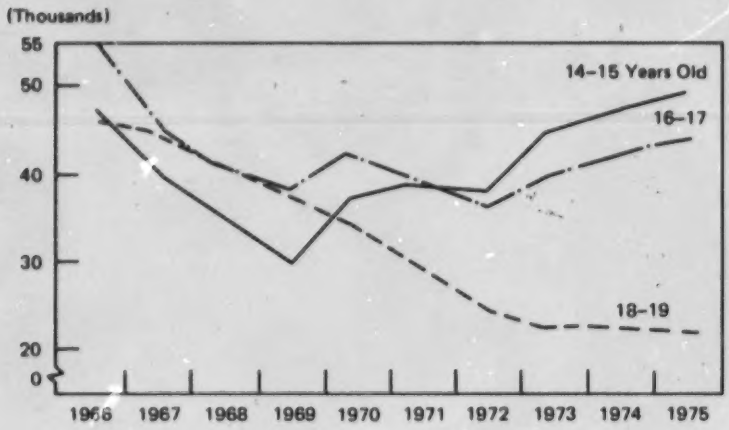
16. The absolute number and percentage of juvenile crimes by each age group are as follows:

14	22,087	18.9%
15	26,331	22.5
16	25,700	22.0
17	18,364	15.7
18	13,448	11.5
19	10,852	9.3

Fluctuation in juvenile crime by age group over the period 1966 to 1975 is shown in Figure 8.

The interpretation of these facts and figures is extremely difficult; in fact, no persuasive interpretation has been made yet. However, in comparison with other industrial nations of

Figure 8. Juvenile crimes, by age of offender, 1966–1975



Source: Japan, Office of the Prime Minister (1976), p. 134.

the world, it seems fortunate for Japan that juvenile crime and delinquency are relatively low. Generally speaking, Japanese youths still have high aspirations and morale in spite of the competitive educational system and other difficulties. There are, of course, deviants and deviant behavior, both in reality and potentially, but the overall climate of the youth culture is relatively stable and "gentle." It does appear, however, that youth culture in Japan today is entering a new phase never before experienced.

8

The Future

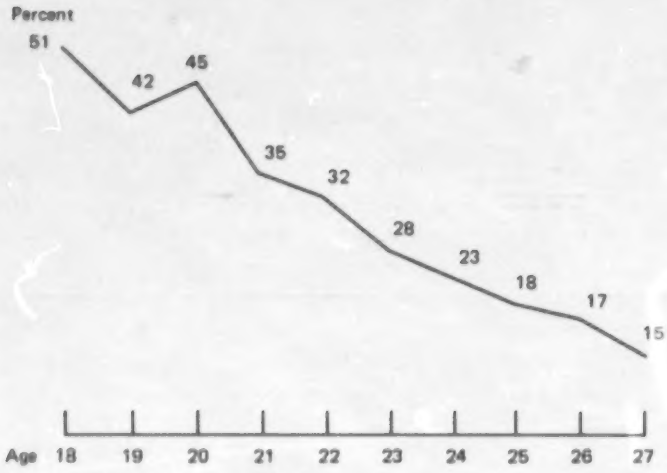
The youth problem in Japan is an extremely complicated one. Facts and research findings often contradict each other, and under such circumstances, it is almost impossible to make any forecast as to what will happen to Japanese youth in the future. But, several problem areas can be defined here.

Problems of Transition

In the first place, it seems that the process of transition from youth to adulthood has become an extraordinarily complicated one. On the one hand, as pointed out by sociologists and psychologists, "early sophistication" has marked the young people of the past few decades. A child at the age of 14 may know what a child of the same age 50 years ago did not, could not, or was even forbidden to know. Fourteen-year-olds today, exposed to media and living in a permissive environment, have easy access to information. "Accelerated growth," represented by early beginning of the menstrual function, has been significant, too. And in that sense, many youths today may be defined as substantially "adults." But on the other hand, subjectively the youth often feel that they are not adults yet.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Nippon Hoso Kyokai (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) Research Division, it was discovered that 51 percent of 18-year-olds felt that they were not adults, and surprisingly enough, even among 27-year-olds, 15 percent said that they were not adults yet (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Percentages of young people who said they did not feel like adults, by age



Source: Tabulated from Nippon Hoso Kyokai, *Public Opinion Polls* (1976).

In such survey research, of course, a question may be raised regarding the definition of adulthood: each respondent might interpret the term "adult" as he or she pleases. But it is quite probable that for the majority of young people today, "adult" means sociopsychological maturity and preparedness or readiness to act as responsible individual citizens, and the figures shown in the graph imply that many young people are skeptical about their own individual maturity. Therefore, it seems that there are ambiguities in the process of transition from childhood and adulthood.

The source of these ambiguities is obvious. In the first place, because of the diffusion of higher education, many young people experience prolonged dependency upon their families and other socializing agents. Even at the age of 20, when young people become treated as adults legally in terms of constitutional rights and duties, they find themselves still dependent upon their families. Indeed, to celebrate their legal adulthood, the Japanese government in 1948 adopted January 15th as "the

day of adulthood," a national holiday. Each year on January 15th, 20-year-olds are congratulated on their legal adulthood both at home and at public places like community centers. As a matter of fact, "the day of adulthood" may be seen as a social institutionalization of the rite of passage in a contemporary context. But as Figure 9 shows, at the age of 20, close to half of the youths psychologically do not regard themselves as adults. This high percentage may represent a self-warning defensive reaction to the public recognition of adulthood, which they are not ready to accept.

Such ambiguities did not exist before. When most young people began working in their late teens, their economic independence made them feel like adults; furthermore, among men, compulsory army drafting at the age of 20 clearly marked their adulthood. But today, young people as well as society at large are puzzled about where the borderline is between childhood and adulthood, in spite of (or because of) the official celebration of "the day of adulthood." How can a graduate student at the age of 25, commuting from his parents' house and depending mostly on his parents, prove that he is an adult? Psychologists could argue that sociopsychological regression on a mass scale has been taking place in Japan in recent years.

As discussed in Chapter 2, 80 percent of university students are engaged in part-time "arbeit" of some kind in order to obtain extra income. It is true that part-time jobs are needed by some students for economic reasons, but there are many young students with upper-middle-class backgrounds who need not worry about extra income but who also take part-time jobs. In their case, the motivation for "arbeit" seems to be more psychological than financial. Even though the money they earn is nominal, it may function as a psychological compensation for their feeling of dependency. Even then, they cannot identify themselves either with "kids" or "adults"; they are somewhere between, in the area which advertisers and marketing experts label as "young adults."

This complicated and ambivalent psychology is typified by a letter from a young male student, 23 to his parents: "Hello, Father, I am short of money as usual. Would you please help me

a bit? Incidentally, I am going to get married. Mother, how are you? Don't work too hard." This letter was read by a disc jockey over the radio. The young man, now ready to get married, apparently is an adult, but still depends upon his father financially. The most important point is that, like many of his contemporaries, he does not sense any contradiction in what he has said. Youth – to the extent that they are represented by this letter – have found a comfortable position in society where they take advantage of the privileges and advantages of both childhood and adulthood, while rejecting the handicaps of childhood and responsibilities of adulthood. Such an image of youth is quite revolutionary in modern Japanese history. Future exploration and research efforts are needed in this area.

Dilemmas in Education

The importance of education to employment in Japanese society has been emphasized throughout this paper. The media, especially the serious newspapers, have been extremely energetic in criticizing the current educational system, and there is a popular image and assumption that unless one has a good education (meaning a diploma from the big-name universities), one will not have good opportunities for employment. Schools specializing in preparation for scholastic entrance examination competitions are extraordinarily prosperous in contemporary Japan, and these competitions start even at the kindergarten level as the result of a strange chain reaction. Many parents believe that good kindergartens promise preparation for a good primary school, and good primary schools give their children qualifications for a good junior high school, and after a series of similar good influences, the good university will be the final result. To exaggerate the situation, a three-year-old child must be in a famous kindergarten if his parents (not the child himself) want him to be accepted by a prestigious university 15 years later.

According to a study completed by the Ministry of Education in early 1977, there are thousands of private "supplementary schools" (known as *Juku* in Japanese) for primary and junior high school children. The *Juku* classes meet early in the

evening on weekdays and often all day over the weekends. The children finish their regular school around 3:00 P.M. and then attend *Juku* to get supplementary and more advanced curricula for two or three hours. In the Tokyo metropolitan area, it is estimated that more than 30 percent of primary school pupils are enrolled in *Juku,* which is essentially a preparatory school for junior high schools. Since junior high school is compulsory, every child is accepted by the local public school, but hundreds of thousands of parents look forward to seeing their children accepted by a prestigious private school which can be a starting point for successful higher education, which implies, eventually, a successful career.

The result is that many young children in Japan today do not have enough time to rest. From 8:30 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. they attend school, and from 4:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. they study at *Juku.* They have to sacrifice weekends for study. Moreover, as discussed in preceding chapters, many families are willing to pay even more money for private tutors at home. In a word, from primary school age on, Japanese children must live in an extremely competitive world, and the only and absolute good for them is to be admitted by big-name universities. Since *Juku* and other extra-school means of instruction apparently are placing tremendous pressures upon young children, a parliamentary subcommittee has taken up this subject as one of the urgent issues in Japanese education. As pointed out in Chapter 1, "craze" is a much better word than "zeal" to describe Japanese education today.

The social implications of the craze for education are diverse and grave. For example, when a Tokyo business executive is transferred to a branch office located in another part of the country, he seldom takes his family with him. He moves to his new office alone, rents a small apartment, and comes back to Tokyo by plane over the weekends. The reason he does not take his family is simply that such a move is a disadvantage to his children, especially the children who are attending a good school. Such family separations due to children's education are rather common practice among the mobile urban middle class, and it is very likely that such separations cause psychological

problems for the entire family. Newspaper reporters often criticize this issue, arguing that separation is undesirable for family mental health; but the reporters themselves, when transferred to a local bureau, usually do not take their families because they also feel that their children's education is more important than family togetherness.

Quite contrary to the craze for education, however, there are several indications that the relationship between education and employment is a myth. The "inflation" of university education has made it impossible for university graduates to be assured of managerial jobs in "big industry" (firms with more than 5,000 employees). In the spring of 1977, approximately a half million young people graduated from colleges and universities, but only 16 percent of them were fortunate enough to find employment in government offices and big industries. Even graduates of such prestigious national universities such as Tokyo or Kyoto had to meet severe competition to be taken by big organizations. All the educational effort – all the sacrifices made since the age of four – did not guarantee anything. It has become simply a matter of statistical probability, and the probability for success is becoming lower and lower. Indeed, one can see a pathological trend in the increase in the number of schools. Of course, there are many bright graduate students who are looking forward to achieving an academic profession in the future, but there are also many young students who decided on graduate school simply because they were unsuccessful in employment. These students have only postponed their critical moment for a few years, and for them, graduate school is just a period of waiting.

Another aspect of Japanese education that deserves keen attention is professional schools as an alternative to university education. More and more ambitious young people who want to become professionals are choosing professional schools, because by definition some of these schools guarantee employment opportunities. During the coming decade, it is probable that more and more parents and young people will become aware of this alternative. The Ministry of Education is encouraging the expansion of professional schools, and

industries are becoming interested in recruiting professionally trained young people who have graduated from professional schools rather than ordinary liberal-arts college graduates, whose potentialities are grim. As a matter of fact, according to a survey by the Japan Recruitment Center in 1976, 18.6 percent of the youths thought that a professional-school diploma would be more advantageous than a university diploma for getting a job, even though the majority of youths still felt that universities might give them a better job or a higher salary upon graduation.

Strangely enough, a cross-cultural survey conducted by the prime minister's office in 1972 revealed that, compared with youths from other countries, Japanese youths did not feel that education was a factor in job discrimination (Japan, Office of the Prime Minister, 1976, p. 270). To the question "Do you think that people are unduly discriminated against in work because of their educational background?" as seen in the following figures, very few Japanese youths answered "yes."

Country	*Percent answering yes*
Japan	17.5
United States	34.8
England	32.7
West Germany	46.3
France	51.3
Switzerland	42.4
Sweden	17.5
Yugoslavia	67.6

What Japanese youths feel or think might be quite different from reality, but as far as their attitudes are concerned they seem to be more optimistic about their jobs and careers relative to their education than their peers in many parts of the world.

Attitudes Toward Work

The same cross-cultural study (Japan, Office of the Prime Minister, 1976), also discovered that Japanese youths were more

work oriented than the young people of the rest of the world. To the question "What is the ultimate value in your life?" the percentage of the young people who answered "challenging work" was conspicuously higher than that in other industrial societies:

Country	*Percent answering "challenging work"*
Japan	28.0
United States	8.9
England	13.3
France	8.8
Sweden	20.7
Yugoslavia	7.5

(German data were not available)

The general public tends to regard contemporary youth as leisure oriented and as a somewhat easy-going generation; and this general image may be correct. But it is important to note that over one-fourth of Japanese youths at least state that they find the value and meaning of their lives in their work. Moreover, in another survey conducted by the Japan Recruitment Center (Japan, Office of the Prime Minister, 1976, p. 263), to the question "Why is work meaningful to you?" 52.5 percent of 18-year-old high school graduates answered "self-realization through work" while 36.6 percent said "income." In other words, for the younger generation today, work is the means by which they develop themselves rather than the means to obtain economic benefit. It is true that youth today are the children of affluence and that they are great spenders and consumers. But at the same time, Japan is one of the very few countries where the work ethic has not disappeared, and high respect is still given to hard work. These research findings may seem to contradict points discussed in earlier chapters, but it is safe to say that in Japan, in cross-cultural comparison, there seem to be more continuities than discontinuities in values and ethics, in spite of the well-defined "generation gap."

In mobile society, especially a society totally dependent upon overseas trade, it is almost impossible to predict the future. But there is one thing that is very certain: Toward the end of this century, the demographic structure of Japan will be quite different from that of today. Life expectancy is becoming longer and longer, and the birth rate is declining. In the year 2000, the "baby boom" generation will reach their early 50s, and society as a whole will be dominated by an old and middle-aged population. At present, Japanese youth enjoy full employment, but it is doubtful if this situation will prevail 25 years from now. More social welfare measures must be taken to prepare for the forthcoming demographic structure, and this may mean a greater burden for the very young new generation who are under 10 at present. As an eminent futurist aptly remarked, "The future is not what it used to be."

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